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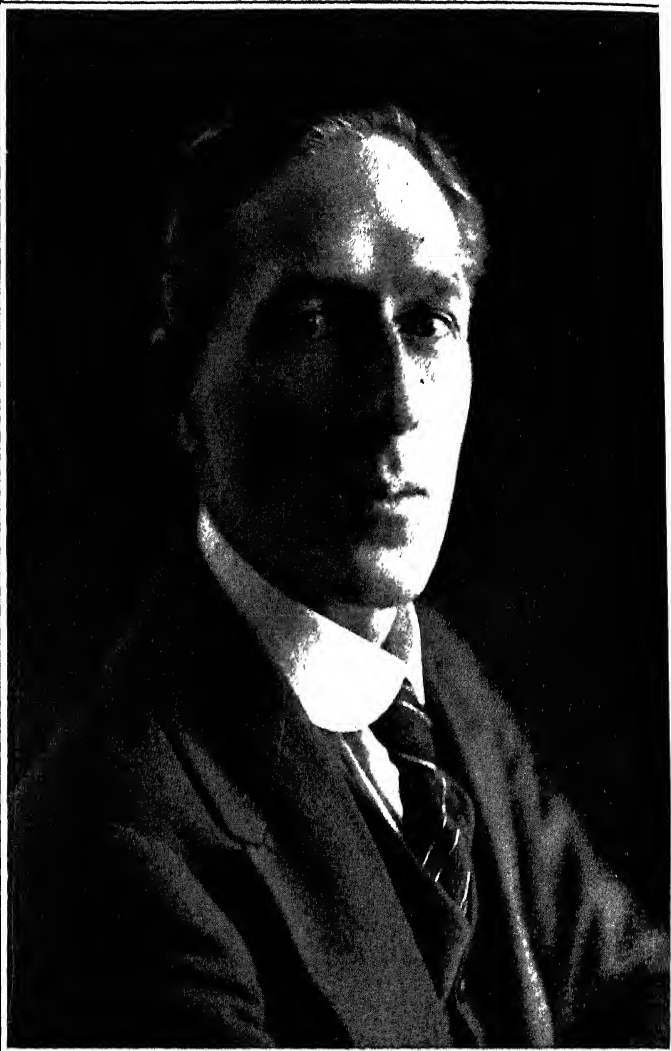
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PEOPLE OF DESTINY

Americans as I Saw Them
At Home and Abroad



PHILIP GIBBS

*Americans as I saw them
at Home and Abroad*

by

PHILIP GIBBS

Author of
"NOW IT CAN BE TOLD"



HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS
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G.A.A.

PEOPLE OF DESTINY

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I

THE ADVENTURE OF LIFE IN NEW YORK

I HAD the luck to go to New York for the first time when the ordinary life of that City of Adventure—always so vital and dynamic in activity—was intensified by the emotion of historic days. The war was over, and the warriors were coming home with the triumph of victory as the reward of courage; but peace was still delayed and there had not yet crept over the spirits of the people the staleness and disillusionment that always follow the ending of war, when men say: “What was the use of it, after all? Where are gratitude and justice? Who pays me for the loss of my leg?” . . . The emotion of New York life was visible in its streets. The city itself, monstrous, yet dreamlike and mystical as one sees it first rising to fantastic shapes through the haze of dawn above the waters

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of the Hudson, seemed to be excited by its own historical significance. There was a vibration about it as sunlight splashed its gold upon the topmost stories of the skyscrapers and sparkled in the thousand windows of the Woolworth Tower and flung black bars of shadow across the lower blocks. Banners were flying everywhere in the streets that go straight and long between those perpendicular cliffs of masonry, and the wind that comes blowing up the two rivers ruffled them. They were banners of rejoicing, but reminders also of the service and sacrifice of each house from which they were hanging, with golden stars of death above the heads of the living crowds surging there below them. In those decorations of New York I saw the imagination of a people conscious of their own power, and with a dramatic instinct able to impress the multitudes with the glory and splendor of their achievement. It was the same sense of drama that is revealed commercially in the genius of advertisement which startled me when I first walked down Broadway, dazzled by moving pictures of light, by flashing signs that shouted to me from high heaven to buy chewing-gum and to go on chewing; and

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squirming, wriggling, revolving snakes of changing color that burned letters of fire into my brain, so that even now in remembrance my eyes are scorched with the imprint of a monstrous kitten unrolling an endless reel of cotton. The "Welcome Home" of American troops was an advertisement of American manhood, idealized by emotion; and it was designed, surely, by an artist whose imagination had been touched by the audacity of the master-builders of New York who climb to the sky with their houses. I think it was inspired also by the vision of the moving-picture kings who resurrect the gorgeous life of Babylon, and re-establish the court of Cleopatra, for Theda Bara, the "Movie Queen." When the men of the Twenty-seventh Division of New York came marching home down Fifth Avenue they passed through triumphal arches of white plaster that seemed solid enough to last for centuries, though they had grown high, like Jack's beanstalk, in a single night; and the troops glanced sideways at a vast display of Indian trophies with tattered colors like those of sunburnt wigwams where the spears of the "braves" were piled above the shields of fallen warriors.

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“Like an undergraduate’s cozy corner,” said an unkind wit, and New York laughed, but liked the symbolism of those shields and went on with astonished eyes to gaze at the masterpiece of Chalfin, the designer of it all, which was a necklace like a net of precious jewels, suspended, between two white pillars surmounted by stars, across the Avenue. At night strong searchlights played upon this necklace, and at the end of those bars of white radiance, shot through the darkness, the hanging jewels swayed and glittered with a thousand delicate colors like diamonds, rubies, emeralds, and sapphires. Night after night, as I drove down Fifth Avenue, I turned in the car to look back at the astonishing picture of that triumphal archway, and saw how the long tide of cars behind was caught by the searchlights so that all their metal was like burnished gold and silver; and how the faces of dense crowds staring up at the suspended necklace were all white—dead-white as Pierrot’s; and how the sky above New York and the tall clifflike masses of masonry on each side of Fifth Avenue were fingered by the outer radiance of the brightness that was blinding in the heart of the city. To me, a stranger in New York,

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unused to the height of its buildings and to the rush of traffic in its streets, these illuminations of victory were the crowning touch of fantasy, and I seemed to be in a dream of some City of the Future, among people of a new civilization, strange and wonderful. The soldiers of the Twenty-seventh Division were not overcome by emotion at this display in their honor. "That's all right," they said, grinning at the cheering crowds, "and when do we eat?" Those words reminded me of Tommy Atkins, who would go through the hanging-gardens of Babylon itself—if the time-machine were switched back—with the same shrewd humor.

The adventure of life in New York, always startling and exciting, I am certain, to a man or woman who enters its swirl as a stranger, was more stirring at the time of my first visit because of this eddying influence of war's back-wash. The city was overcrowded with visitors from all parts of the United States who had come in to meet their home-coming soldiers, and having met them stayed awhile to give these boys a good time after their exile. This floating population of New York flowed into all the hotels and restaurants and theaters. Two new hotels—

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the Commodore and the Pennsylvania—were opened just before I came, and, with two thousand bedrooms each, had no room to spare, and did not reduce the population of the Plaza, Vanderbilt, Manhattan, Biltmore, or Ritz-Carlton. I watched the social life in those palaces and found it more entertaining than the most sensational “movie” with a continuous performance. The architects of those American hotels have vied with one another in creating an atmosphere of richness and luxury. They have been prodigal in the use of marble pillars and balustrades, more magnificent than Roman. They have gone to the extreme limit of taste in gilding the paneled walls and ceilings from which they have suspended enormous candelabra like those in the palace of Versailles. I lost myself in the vastness of tea-rooms and lounges, and when invited to a banquet found it necessary to bring my ticket, because often there are a dozen banquets in progress in one hotel, and there is a banqueting-room on every floor. When I passed up in the elevator of one hotel I saw the different crowds in the corridors surging toward those great lighted rooms where the tables were spread with flowers, and from which came gusts of

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“jazz” music or the opening bars of “The Star-spangled Banner.”

In all the dining-rooms there rises the gusty noise of many conversations above the music of an orchestra determined to be heard, and between the bars of a Leslie Stuart waltz, or on the last beat of the “Humoreske,” a colored waiter says, “Chicken okra, sah?” or “Clam chowder?” and one hears the laughing words of a girl who asks, “Do you mind if I powder my nose?” and does so with a glance at a little gold mirror and a dab from a little gold box. The vastness, and the overwhelming luxury, of the New York hotels was my first and strongest impression in this city, after I had recovered from the sensation of the high fantastic buildings; but it occurred to me very quickly that this luxury of architecture and decoration has no close reference to the life of the people. They are only visitors in *la vie de luxe*—and do not belong to it, and do not let it enter into their souls or bodies. In a wealthier, more expansive way, they are like the city clerks and their girls in London who pay eighteenpence for a meal in marble halls at Lyon’s Popular Café and sit around a gilded menu-card, saying, “Isn’t it won-

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derful . . . and shall we go home by tram?" There are many rich people in New York—more, I suppose, than in any other city of the world—but, apart from cosmopolitan men and women who have luxury beneath their skins, there is no innate sense of it in the social life of these people. In the hotel palaces, as well as in the private mansions along Fifth Avenue and Riverside Drive, all their outward splendor does not alter the simplicity and honesty of their character. They remain essentially "middle-class" and have none of the easy licentiousness of that European aristocracy which, before the war, flaunted its wealth and its vice in Paris, Vienna, Monte Carlo, and other haunts where the cocottes of the world assembled to barter their beauty, and where idle men went from boredom to boredom in search of subtle forms of pleasure. American women of wealth spend vast sums of money on dress, and there is the glitter of diamonds at many dinner-tables, but most of them have too much shrewdness of humor to play the "vamp," and the social code to which they belong is swept clean by common sense. "My dear," said an American hostess who belongs to one of the old rich families of

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New York, "forgive me for wearing my diamonds to-night. It must shock you, coming from scenes of ruin and desolation." This dowager duchess of New York, as I like to think of her, wore her diamonds as the mayor of a provincial town in England wears his chain of office, but as she sat at the head of her table in one of the big mansions of New York I saw that wealth had not cumbered the soul of this masterful lady, whose views on life are as direct and simple as those of Abraham Lincoln. She was the middle-class housewife in spite of the footmen who stood in fear of her.

Essentially middle-class in the best sense of the word were the crowds I met in the hotels. The men were making money—lots of it—by hard work. They had taken a few days off, or left business early, to meet their soldier-sons in these gilded halls where they had a sense of satisfaction in spending large numbers of dollars in a short time.

"This is my boy from 'over there'! Just come back."

I heard that introduction many times, and saw the look of pride behind the glasses that were worn by a gray-eyed man, who had his hand on the arm of an upstanding fellow in

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field uniform, tall and lean and hard. "It's good to be back," said one of these young officers, and as he sat at table he looked round the huge *salon* with its cut-glass candelabra, where scores of little dinner-parties were in progress to the strident music of a stringed band, and then, with a queer little smile about his lips, as though thinking of the contrast between this scene and "over there," said, "Darned good!" In their evening frocks the women were elegant—they know how to dress at night—and now and then the fresh, frank beauty of one of these American girls startled my eyes by its witchery of youth and health. Some of them are *décolleté* to the ultimate limit of a milliner's audacity, and foolishly I suffered from a sense of confusion sometimes because of the physical revelations of elderly ladies whose virtue, I am sure, is as that of Cæsar's wife. The frail queens of beauty in the lotus-garden of life's enchanted places would envy some of the frocks that come out of Fifth Avenue, and scream with horror at their prices. But although the American woman with a wealthy husband likes to put on the flimsy robes of Circe, it is only as she would go to a fancy-dress ball in a frock that would make

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her brother say: "Gee! . . . And where did you get that bit of fluff?" She is Circe, with the Suffrage, and high ideals of life, and strong views on the League of Nations. She makes up her face like a French *comédienne*, but she has, nine times out of ten, the kind heart of a parson's wife in rural England and a frank, good-natured wit which faces the realities of life with the candor of a clean mind.

I found "gay life" in New York immensely and soberly respectable. One could take one's maiden aunt into the heart of it and not get hot by her blushes. In fact, it is the American maiden aunt who sets the pace of the fox-trot and the one-step in dancing-rooms where there are music and afternoon tea. Several times I supped "English breakfast tea"—I suspect Sir Thomas Lipton had something to do with it—at five o'clock on bright afternoons, watching the scene at Sherry's and Delmonico's. It seemed to me that this dancing habit was a most curious and over-rated form of social pleasure. It was as though American society had said, "Let us be devilishly gay!" but started too early in the day, with desperate sobriety. Many couples left the tea-table for the pol-

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ished boards and joined the throng which surged and eddied in circles of narrow circumference, jostled by other dancers. Youth did not have it all its own way. On the contrary, I noticed that bald-headed gentlemen with some width of waistbands were in the majority, dancing with pridigious gravity and the maiden aunts. They were mostly visitors, I am told, from other cities—Bostonnians escaping from the restrictions of their Early Victorian atmosphere, senators who voted for prohibition in their own states, business men who had booked reservations on midnight trains from Grand Central Terminal. Here and there young officers of the army and navy led out pretty girls, and with linked arms, and faces very close together, danced in a kind of coma, which they seemed to enjoy, though without any sparkle in their eyes. There were also officers of other nations—a young Frenchman appealing to the great heart of the American people on behalf of devastated France, and dancing for the sake of people scorched by the horrors of war, to say nothing of the little American girl whose yellow fringe was on his Croix de Guerre; and young English officers belonging to the British Mission, and engaged

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in propaganda — oh, frightful word! — of which a *thé dansant* at Delmonico's was, no doubt, a serious part of duty. One figure that caught my eye gave the keynote to the moral and spiritual character of the scene. It was the figure of a stout old lady wearing a hat with a huge feather which waggled over her nose as she danced the one-step with earnest vivacity, and an old gentleman with side-whiskers. She panted as she came back to the tea-table, and said, "Say, that makes me feel young!" It occurred to me that she might be Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch on a visit to New York, and anyhow her presence assured me that afternoon dancing at Delmonico's need not form the theme of any moralist in search of vice in high places. It is not only respectable, it is domestic. Savonarola himself would not have denounced such innocent amusement. Nor did I find anything to shock the sensibilities of high-souled ethics in such midnight haunts as the Ziegfeld Follies or the Winter Garden, except the inanity of all such shows where large numbers of pretty girls and others disport themselves in flowing draperies and colored lights before groups of tired people who can hardly hide their boredom, but

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yawn laughingly over their cocktails and say, "Isn't she wonderful?" when Mollie King sings a song about a variety of smiles, and discuss the personality of President Wilson between comic turns of the Dooley brothers. That at least is what happened in my little group on the roof of the Century Theater, where a manufacturer of barbed wire—I wonder if they were his barbs on which I tore myself in Flanders fields—initiated me into the mystery of a Bacardi cocktail followed by a stinger, from which I was rescued, in the nick of time, by a kind lady on my right who took pity on my innocence. A famous playwright opposite, as sober as a judge, as courteous as Beau Brummell, passed the time of day, which was a wee small hour of morning, with little ladies who came into the limelight, until suddenly he said, with a sigh of infinite impatience, "Haven't we enjoyed ourselves enough? I want my bed"; so interrupting a serious discussion between a war correspondent and a cartoonist on the exact truth about German atrocities, to the monstrous melody of a jazz band. Human nature is the same in New York as in other cities of the world. Passion, weakness, folly, are not eliminated from the relations be-

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tween American men and women. But to find vice and decadence in American society one has to go in search of it; and I did not go. I found New York society tolerant in its views, frank in its expression of opinion, fond of laughter, and wonderfully sincere. Wealth does not spoil its fresh and healthy outlook on life, and its people are idealists at heart, with a reverence for the old-fashioned virtues and an admiration for those who "make good" in whatever job to which they put their hands.

After all, hotel life, and restaurant life, and the glamorous world of the Great White Way, do not reveal the real soul of New York. They are no more a revelation of normal existence than boulevard life in Paris represents the daily round of the average Parisian. They are the happy hunting-grounds of the transient, and the real New-Yorker only visits them in hours of leisure and boredom.

Another side of the adventure of life in New York is "downtown," where the subways and the overhead railways pour out tides of humanity who do not earn their dollars without hard work and long hours of it. I should never have found my way to

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Bowling Green and Wall Street without a guide, because the underground world of the subways, where electric trains go rushing like shuttles through the warp and woof of a monstrous network, is utterly confusing to a stranger. But with the guide, who led me by the hand and laughed at my childlike bewilderment, I came into the heart of New York business life and saw its types in their natural environment. It is an alarming world to the wanderer who comes there suddenly. I confess that when I first walked through those deep gorges, between the mighty walls of houses as high as mountains in a surge of humanity in a hurry, I felt dazed and cowardly. I had a conviction that my nerve-power would never survive the stress and strain of such a life in such a place. I nearly dislocated my neck by gazing up at the heights of the skyscrapers, rising story on story to fifty or sixty floors. In a House of a Thousand Windows I took the elevator to the top story and wished I hadn't when the girl in charge of the lift asked, "What floor?" and was answered by a quiet gentleman who said, "Thirty-one." That was our first stop, and in the few seconds we took to reach this altitude I had a vision of

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this vast human ant-heap, with scores of offices on each floor, and typewriters clicking in all of them, and girl-clerks taking down letters from hard-faced young men juggling with figures which, by the rise or drop of a decimal point, mean the difference between millions of dollars in the markets of the world. Each man and woman there in this House of a Thousand Windows had a human soul, with its own little drama of life, its loves and hopes and illusions, but in the vastness of one skyscraper, in the whirlpool of commerce, in the machinery of money-making, the humanities of life seemed to be destroyed and these people to be no more than slaves of modern civilization, ruthless of their individual happiness. What could they know of art, beauty, leisure, the quiet pools of thought? . . . Out in Wall Street there was pandemonium. The outside brokers—the curb men—were bidding against one another for stocks not quoted on the New York Exchange—the Standard Oil Company among them—and their hoarse cries mingled in a raucous chorus. I stood outside a madhouse staring at lunatics. Surely it was a madhouse, surrounded by other homes for incurably insane! This particular

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house was a narrow, not very tall, building of reddish brown brick, like a Georgian house in London, and out of each window, which was barred, poked two rows of faces, one above the other, as though the room inside were divided by a false floor. In the small window-frames sat single figures, in crouched positions, with telephone receivers on their ears and their faces staring at the crowd in the street below. Each one of those human faces, belonging to young men of healthy appearance, was making most hideous grimaces, and each grimace was accompanied by strange, incomprehensible gestures of the man's fingers. With a thumb and two fingers, or a thumb and three fingers, they poked through the windows with violent efforts to attract the notice of individuals in the street. I saw, indeed, that all this fingering had some hidden meaning and that the maniacs as I had first taken them to be were signaling messages to the curb brokers, who wore caps of different colors in order to be distinguished from their fellows. Up and down the street, and from the topmost as well as from the lower stories of many buildings, I saw the grimaces and the gestures of the window-men, and the noise and tumult in the street

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became more furious. It was a lively day in Wall Street, and I thanked God that my fate had not led me into such a life. It seemed worse than war. . . .

Not really so, after all. It was only the outward appearance of things that distressed one's soul. Looking closer, I saw that all these young men on the curb seemed very cheery fellows, and were enjoying themselves as much as boys in a Rugby "scrum." There was nothing wrong with their nerves. There was nothing wrong with a crowd of young business men and women with whom I sat down to luncheon in a restaurant called Robin's, not far from the Stock Exchange. These were the working-bees of the great hive which is New York. They were in the front-line trenches of the struggle for existence, and they seemed as cheerful as our fighting-men who were always less gloomy than the fellows at the rear in the safe back-waters of war. Business men and lady-clerks, typists, and secretaries, were all mingled at the little tables where the backs of chairs touched, and there was a loud, incessant chatter like the noise of a parrot-house. I overheard some fragments of conversation at the tables close to me.

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"They don't seem to be getting on with the Peace Conference," said a young man with large spectacles. "All the little nations are trying to grab a bit of their neighbors' ground."

"I saw the cutest little hat—" said a girl whose third finger was stained with red ink.

"Have you seen that play by Maeterlinck?" asked an elderly man so like President Wilson's portraits that he seemed to be the twin brother of that much-discussed man.

These people were human all through, not at all dehumanized, after all, because they lived maybe on the thirty-first story of a New York skyscraper. I dare say also that their work is not so strenuous as it looks from the outside, and that they earn more dollars a week than business men and women of their own class in England, so that they have more margin for the pleasures of life, for the purchase of a "cute little hat," even for a play by Maeterlinck.

After business hours many of these people hurry away from New York to suburbs, where they get quickly beyond the turmoil of the city in places with bustling little high streets of their own and good shops and, on

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the outskirts, neat little houses of wooden framework, in gardens where flowers grow between great rocks which crop out of the soil along the Connecticut shore. They are the "commuters," or, as we should say in England, the season-ticket-holders, and, as I did some "commuting" myself during a ten weeks' visit to America, I used to see them make a dash for their trains between five and six in the afternoon or late at night after theater-going in New York. I never tired of the sight of those crowds in the great hall of the Grand Central Terminal or in the Pennsylvania Station, and saw the very spirit of the United States in those vast buildings which typify modern progress. In England a railway station is, as a rule, the ugliest, most squalid place in any great city; but in America it is, even in provincial towns, a great adventure in architecture, where the mind is uplifted by nobility of design and imagination is inspired by spaciousness, light, color, and silence. It is strangely, uncannily quiet in the central hall of the Pennsylvania Station, as one comes down a long broad flight of steps to the vast floor space below a high dome—painted blue like a summer sky, with golden stars atwinkling—

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uplifted on enormous arches. It is like entering a great cathedral, and, though hundreds of people are scurrying about, there is a hush through the hall because of its immense height, in which all sound is lost, and there is no noise of footsteps and only a low murmur of voices. So it is also in the Grand Central Terminal, where I found myself many times before the last train left. There is no sign of railway lines or engines, or the squalor of sidings and sheds. All that is hidden away until one is admitted to the tracks before the trains start. Instead, there are fruit-stalls and flower-stalls bright with color, and book-stalls piled high with current literature from which every mind can take its choice, and candy-stalls where the aching jaw may find its chewing-gum, and link up meditation with mastication, on the way to New Rochelle—"forty-five minutes from Broadway"—or to the ruralities of Rye, Mamaroneck, and Port Chester, this side of high life in Greenwich, Connecticut.

Some of the male commuters have a habit of playing cards between New York and New Rochelle, showing an activity of mind not dulled by their day's work in town. But others indulge in conversational quartets,

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and on these journeys I heard more than I wanted to know about the private life of President Wilson, and things I wanted to learn about the experiences of American soldiers in France, the state of feeling between America and England, and the philosophy of success by men who had succeeded. It was a philosophy of simple virtue enforced by will-power and a fighting spirit. "Don't hit often," said one of these philosophers, who began life as an errand-boy and now designs the neckwear of society, "but, when you do, hit hard and clean. No man is worth his salt unless he loses his temper at the right time."

In the last train to Greenwich were American soldiers and mariners just back from France, who slept in corners of the smoking-coach and wakened with a start at New Rochelle, with a dazed look in their eyes, as though wondering whether they had merely dreamed of being home again and were still in the glades of the Argonne forest. . . . The powder was patchy on the nose of a tired lady whose head drooped on the shoulder of a man in evening clothes chewing an unlighted cigar and thinking, with a little smile about his lips, of something that had happened in

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the evening. Two typist-girls with their mothers had been to a lecture by Captain Carpenter, V.C., one of the heroes of Zeebrugge. They were "crazy" about him. They loved his description of the "blunt end" and the "pointed end" of the ship. They had absorbed a lot of knowledge about naval tactics; and they were going to buy his photograph to put over their desks. . . .

Part of the adventure of life in New York is the acquisition of unexpected knowledge by means of lectures; and Carnegie Hall is the Mecca of lecturers. Having been one of the lecturers, I can speak from personal experience when I say that a man who stands for the first time on the naked desert of that platform, looking toward rows of white faces and white shirt-fronts to the farthest limit of the topmost galleries, feels humility creep into his soul until he shrinks to the size of Hop-o'-My-Thumb and is the smallest, loneliest thing in the whole wide world. A microbe is a monster to him, and he quakes with terror when he hears the first squeak of his tiny voice in the vast spaciousness under that high, vaulted roof. On that first night of mine I would have sold myself, with white shirt, cuff-links, and quaking body, for a

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two-cent piece, if any one had been fool enough to buy me and let me off that awful ordeal. And yet, looking back on it now, I know that it was the finest hour of my life, and a wonderful reward for small service, when all those people rose to greet me, and there came up to me out of that audience a spiritual friendship so warm and generous that I felt it like the touch of kindly hands about me, and recovered from my fright. Afterward, as always happens in America, there was a procession of people who came onto the platform to shake hands and say words of thanks, so that one gets into actual touch with all kinds of people and their friendship becomes personal. In that way I made thousands of friends in America and feel toward them all a lasting gratitude because of the generous, warm-hearted, splendid things they said as they passed with a quick hand-clasp. The lecture habit in America is deep-rooted and widespread. Every small town has its lecture-hall, and is in competition with every other town near by for lecturers who have some special fame or knowledge. In New York there is an endless series of lectures, not only in places like Carnegie Hall and Æolian Hall, but in

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clubs and churches. Great audiences, made up of rich society people as well as the "intellectuals" and the professional classes, gather in force to hear any man whose personality makes him interesting or who has something to say which they want to hear. In many cases personality is sufficient. People of New York will cheerfully pay five dollars to see a famous man, and not think their money wasted if his words are lost in empty space, or if they know already as much as he can tell them about the subject of his speech. Marshal Joffre had no need to prepare orations. When he said, "*Messieurs et mesdames*," they cheered him for ten minutes, and when, after that, he said, "*je suis enchanté*," they cheered him for ten minutes more. They like to see the men who have done things, the men who count for something, and to study the personality of a man about whom they have read. If he has something to tell them, so much the better, and if he is not renowned he must tell them something pretty good if he wants their money and their patience. I have no doubt that the habit of lecture-going is one of the greatest influences at work in the education of the American people. The knowl-

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edge they acquire in this way does not bite very deep, and it leaves, I fancy, only a superficial impression, but it awakens their intelligence and imagination, directs their thoughts to some of the big problems of life, and is a better way of spending an evening than idle gossip or a variety entertainment. The League for Political Education which I had the honor of addressing in Carnegie Hall has a series of lectures—three times a week, I think—which are attended by people engaged in every kind of educative and social work in New York, and at a luncheon afterward I listened to a number of speeches by public men and women more inspiring in their sincerity of idealism than anything I have heard in similar assemblies. All these people were engaged in practical work for the welfare of their fellow-creatures, as pioneers of progress in the adventure of life in New York, and the women especially, like Jane Addams, impressed me by the real beauty of their personality.

Another phase of life which interested me was the club world of the city, and in these clubs I met most of the men and many of the women who count in the intellectual activity of New York. I came in touch there with

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every stratum of thought and tradition which makes up the structure of American politics and ideas. I met the conservatives of the Union Club who live in an atmosphere of dignified austerity (reminding me of the Athenæum Club in London, where the very waiters have the air of bishops and the political philosophy of the late Lord Salisbury), and who confided to me with quiet gravity their personal and unprintable opinions of Mr. Wilson; I became an honorary member of the Union League Club, hardly less conservative in its traditional outlook and having a membership which includes many leading business and professional men of New York City. It was here that I saw a touching ceremony which is one of my best memories of the United States, when the negro troops of a fighting regiment marched up Fifth Avenue in a snow-storm, and gave back their colors for safe-keeping to the Union League Club, which had presented them when they went to war. Ex-Governor Hughes, speaking from the balcony, praised them for their valor in the great conflict for the world's liberty, when they fought for the country which had given them their own freedom by no light sacrifice of blood. By their service

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in France they had gained a glory for their citizenship in the United States and stood equal with their white comrades in the gratitude of the American people. There were tears in the eyes of colored officers when, after a luncheon in the Union League Club, they heard other words like those, giving honor to the spirit of their race. . . . Up the wide stairway of the club, in the softly glowing light which comes through a stained-glass window, the colors of the darky regiment hang as a memorial of courage and sacrifice. . . .

I was the guest of the Arts Club amid a crowd of painters, poets, musicians, and writing-men, who sat at long tables in paneled rooms decorated with pictures and caricatures which were the work of their own members. Clouds of tobacco smoke made wreaths above the board. A soldier-poet rose between the courses and sang his own songs to the chorus of his comrades. It was a jolly night among jolly good fellows, who had wit, and the gift of laughter, and large hearts which beat in sympathy for those who suffered in the war. . . . In the City Club I had a room when I wanted it, and the hall porter and the bell-boys, and the elevator-

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man, and the clerks in the office, shook hands with me when I went in and out, so that I felt at home there, after a splendid night when crowds of ladies joined the men to listen to my story of the war, and when a famous glee-party sang songs to me across rose garlands on the banquet table. The City Club has a number of habitués who play dominoes on quiet nights, and in deep leather chairs discuss the destiny of nations as men who pull the wires which make the puppets dance. It is the home of the foreign correspondents in New York, who know the inside of international politics, and whose president is (or was, at the time of my visit) a kindly, human, English soul with a genius for fellowship which has made a little League of Nations in this New York house. I met him first, as a comrade of the pen, in the Street of Adventure, where London journalists rub shoulders on their way to history; and in New York his friendship was a generous and helpful gift, and by his good words I made many other friends.

It seemed to me that New York is a city where friendship is quickly made, and I found that the best part of my adventure in the city. Day after day, when dusk was

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creeping into the streets and lights began to gleam in all the windows of the houses that reach up to the stars, I drove down the long highway of Fifth Avenue with a certainty that before the evening was out I should meet a number of friendly souls who would make me welcome at their tables and reveal their convictions and ideals with a candor which does not come to English people until their ice of reserve is broken or thawed. And that was always so. At a small dinner-party or a big reception, in one of the great mansions of New York, or in a suite of rooms high above the traffic of the street, conversation was free-and-easy, with or without the aid of a cocktail, and laughter came in gusts, and American men and women spoke of the realities of life frankly and without camouflage, with a directness and sincerity that touched the essential truth of things. In one room Melba sang with eternal girlhood in her voice, while painters and diplomats, novelists, and wits, famous actresses and princesses of New York, were hushed into silence for a while, until, when the spell was broken, there rose again a merry tumult of tongues. In another room a group of "intellectuals," tired of talking about war and

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peace, played charades like children in the nursery, and sat down to drawing games with shouts of mirth at a woman's head with the body of a fish and the legs of a bird. In another house the King's Jester of New York, who goes from party to party like a French wit—the little Abbé Morellet—in the *salons* of France before the Revolution, destroyed the dignity of decorous people by a caricature of German opera and an imitation of a German husband eating in a public restaurant. I knew the weakness that comes from a surfeit of laughter. . . . I did not tire of these social adventures in New York, and I came to see something of the spirit of the people as it was revealed in the cosmopolitan city. I found that spirit touched, in spite of social merriment, by the tragedy of war, and anxious about the outcome of peace. I found these people conscious of new responsibilities thrust upon them by fate, and groping in their minds for some guidance, for some clear light upon their duty and destiny in the reshaping of the world by the history that has happened. Europe, three thousand miles away, is still a mystery to them, full of unknown forces and peoples and passions which they cannot understand, though they read

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all their Sunday papers, with all their bulky supplements. When I went among them they were divided by the conflict of political differences with passionate emotion, and torn between conflicting ideals of patriotism and humanity. But most of them put on one side, with a fine disdain, all meanness of thought and action and the dirty squalor of financial interests. Sure of their power among nations, the people I met—and I met many of the best—were anxious to rise to their high chance in history and to do the Big Thing in a big way, when they saw the straight road ahead.

When I left New York they were raising their *fifth great Victory Loan*, and the streets were draped in banners bearing the great V for Victory and for the number of the loan. Their sense of drama was at work again to make this enterprise successful, and their genius of advertisement was in action to put a spell upon the people. The face of a farmer was on the posters in many streets, and that sturdy old fellow upon whose industry the wealth of America depends so much, because it is founded in the soil, put his hand in his pocket and said, "Sure, we'll see it through!"

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From my brief visit one conviction came to me. It is that whatever line of action the American people take in the new world that is now being born out of the tumult of war, they will see it through, by any sacrifice and at any cost.

II

SOME PEOPLE I MET IN AMERICA

AS a professional onlooker of life (and it is a poor profession, as I must admit) it has always been my habit to study national and social types in any country where I happen to be. I find an untiring interest in this, and prefer to sit in a French café, for example, watching the people who come in and out, and hearing scraps of conversation that pass across the table, to the most thrilling theatrical entertainment. And I find more interest in "common" people than in the uncommonly distinguished, by fame and power. To me the types in a London omnibus or a suburban train are more absorbing as a study than a group of generals or a party of statesmen, and I like to discover the lives of the world's nobodies, their way of thought and their outlook on the world, by the character in their faces and their little social habits. In that way one gets a sense of the social drama of a country and of the

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national ideals and purpose. So when I went to the United States after four and a half years in the war zone, where I had been watching another kind of drama, hideous and horrible in spite of all its heroism, I fell into my old habit of searching for types and studying characters. I had unusual opportunity. New York and many other cities opened their hearts and their houses to me in a most generous way, and I met great numbers of people of every class and kind.

The first people I met, before I had stepped off my ship of adventure, were young newspaper men who searched the ship like a sieve for any passenger who had something in his life or brain worth telling to the world. I was scared of them, having heard that they could extract the very secrets of one's soul by examination of the third degree; but I found them human and friendly fellows who greeted me cheerily and did not take up much time when they set me up like a lay-figure on the boat deck, turned on the "movie"-machine, snap-shotted me from various angles, and offered me American cigarettes as a sign of comradeship. I met many other newspaper men and women in the United States; those who control the

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power of the press—the masters of the machine which shapes the mind of peoples—and those who feed its wheels with words. Because I had some history to tell, the word-writers lay in wait for me, found my telephone number in any hotel of any town before I knew it myself, tapped at my bedroom door when I was in the transition stage between day and evening clothes, and asked questions about many things of which I knew nothing at all, so that I had to camouflage my abysmal depths of ignorance.

They know their job, those American reporters, and I was impressed especially by the young women. There was one girl who sat squarely in front of me, fixed me with candid gray eyes, and for an hour put me through an examination about my sad past until I had revealed everything. There is nothing that girl doesn't know about me, and I should blush to meet her again. She did not take a single note—by that I knew her as a good journalist—and wrote two columns of revelation with most deadly accuracy and a beautiful style. Another girl followed me round a picture-gallery listening to casual remarks among a group of friends, and wrote an article on art-criticism which left me

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breathless with admiration at her wit and knowledge, of which I took the credit. One young man, once a Rhodes scholar at Oxford, boarded the train at New York, bought me a drawing-room for private conversation, and by the time we reached Philadelphia made it entirely futile for me to give a lecture, because he had it all in his memory, and wrote the entire history of everything I had seen and thought through years of war, in next day's paper. I liked a young Harvard man who came to see me in Boston. He had a modesty and a winning manner which made me rack my brains to tell him something good, and I admired his type, so clean and boyish and quick in intelligence. He belonged to the stuff of young America, as I saw it in the fields of France, eager for service whatever the risk. I met the editorial staffs of many newspapers, and was given a luncheon by the proprietor and editors of one great newspaper in New York which is perhaps the biggest power in the United States to-day. All the men round me were literary types, and I saw in their faces the imprint of hard thought, and of hard work more strenuous, I imagine, than in the newspaper life of any other country

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of the world. They all had an absorbing interest in the international situation after the armistice, and knew a good deal about the secret workings of European policy. A young correspondent just back from Russia made a speech summing up his experiences and conclusions, which were of a startling kind, told with the utmost simplicity and bluntness. The proprietor took me into his private room, and outlined his general policy on world affairs, of which the first item on his program was friendship with England. . . . I found among newspaper men a sense of responsibility with which they are not generally credited, and wonderfully alert and open minds; also, apart from their own party politics and prejudices, a desire for fair play and truth. The Yellow Press still has its power, and it is a malign influence in the United States, but the newspapers of good repute are conducted by men of principle and conviction, and their editorial and literary staffs have a high level of talent, representing much, I think, of the best intelligence of America.

The women of America seem to me to have a fair share of that intelligence, and I met many types of them who were interesting as

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social studies. Several states are still resisting woman suffrage, but as far as equality goes in all affairs of daily life outside political power the women of America have long claimed and gained it. During the war they showed in every class, like the women of England, that they could take on men's jobs and do them as well as men in most cases, and better than men in some cases. They drove motor-lorries and machines; they were dairy farmers and agriculturists; they became munition-workers, carpenters, clerks, and elevator-girls, and the womanhood of America rallied up with a wonderful and devoted spirit in a great campaign of work for the Red Cross and all manner of comforts for the troops, who, by a lamentable breakdown in transport organization, never received many of the gifts sent to them by women old and young whose eyes and fingers ached with so much stitching during the long evenings of war. Apart altogether from war-work, American women have made themselves the better halves of men, and the men know it and are deferential to the opinions and desires of their women-folk. It is natural that women should have a wider knowledge of literature and ideas in a scheme of life where men have

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their noses down to the grindstone of work for long hours every day. That is what most American husbands have to do in a struggle for existence which strives up to the possession of a Ford car, generally known as a "Tin Lizzie" or a "Flivver," on the way to a Cadillac or a Packard, a country cottage on Long Island or the Connecticut shore, an occasional visit to Tiffany's in Fifth Avenue for a diamond brooch, or some other trinket symbolizing success, a holiday at Palm Beach, week-ends at Atlantic City, and a relief from boredom after office hours at the Forty-fourth Street Theater or the Winter Garden. That represents the social ambition of the average business man on the road to fortune, and it costs a goodly pile of dollars to be heaped up by hard work, at a high strain of nervous tension. Meanwhile the women are keeping themselves as beautiful as God made them, with slight improvements according to their own ideas, which are generally wrong; decorating their homes; increasing their housekeeping expenses, and reading prodigiously. They read a vast number of books and magazines, so making it possible for men like myself—slaves of the pen—to exist in an otherwise cruel world.

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Before the American lady of leisure gets up to breakfast (generally she doesn't) and uses her lip-salve and powder-puff for the first time in the day, she has her counterpane spread with the morning's newspapers, which are folded into the size of small blankets. There is the *New York Times* for respectability, the *Tribune* for political "pep," and the *World* for social reform. The little lady glances first of all at the picture supplements while she sips her orange juice, reads the head-lines while she gets on with the rolled oats, and with the second cup of coffee settles down to the solid reading-matter of international sensations (skipping, as a rule, the ends of columns "continued on page 4"), until it is time to interview the cook, who again gives notice to leave because of the conduct of the chauffeur or the catlike qualities of the parlor-maid, and handles the telephone to give her Orders of the Day. For some little time after that the telephone is kept busy at both ends, and, with a cigarette threatening to burn a Buhl cabinet, the lady of leisure talks to several friends in New York, answers a call from the Western Union, and receives a night-letter sent over the wire. "No, I am absolutely engaged on



A RELIEF FROM BOREDOM AFTER OFFICE HOURS

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Monday, dear. Tuesday? So sorry I am fixed up that day, too. Yes, and Thursday is quite out of the question. Friday? Oh, hell, make it Monday, then!" That is a well-worn New York joke, and I found it funny and true to life, because it is as difficult to avoid invitations in New York as collisions in Fifth Avenue. There is a little red book on the Buhl cabinet in which the American lady puts down her engagements and the excuses she gave for breaking others (it is useful to remember those), and she calculates that as far as the present day's work is planned she will have time to finish the new novel by John Galsworthy, to get through a pamphlet on bolshevism which was mentioned at dinner by an extremely interesting young man just back from Russia, to buy a set of summer furs in the neighborhood of Forty-second Street (Herbert, poor dear! says they are utterly unnecessary), to lunch at the Ritz-Carlton with a party of friends, including the man who made such a sensation with his lecture on France at the Carnegie Hall (she will get a lot of first-hand knowledge about the French situation), and to look in at the *thé bavardage* with dear Beatrice de H., where some of the company

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of the French theater will meet French-speaking Americans and pretend to understand them. Then there is a nice free evening, for once (oh, that little white lie in the red book!), when she will wallow in the latest masterpiece of H. G. Wells and learn all about God and humanity as revealed by that extraordinary genius with a sense of humor.

So the American lady of leisure keeps up-to-date with the world's lighter thought and skims the surface of the deeper knowledge, using her own common sense as an acid test of truth when the imagination of a novelist runs away with him, and widening her outlook on the problems of life with deliberate desire to understand. It makes her conversation at the dinner-table sparkling, and the men-folk are conscious that she knows more than they do about current literature and international history. She has her dates right, within a century or two, in any talk about medieval England, and she knows who killed Henri IV of France, who were the lovers of Marie de Medici, why Lloyd George quarreled with Lord Northcliffe, and what the ambassador said to the leaders of Russian bolshevism when he met them secretly

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in Holland. It is useful to know those things in any social gathering of intellectuals, and I met several ladies of American society in New York who had a wide range of knowledge of that kind.

Many American ladies, with well-to-do husbands, and with money of their own, which is very useful to them in time of need, do not regard life merely as a game out of which they are trying to get the most fun, but with more serious views; and I think some of those find it hard to satisfy their aspirations, and go about with a touch, or more, of heartache beneath their furs. I met some women who spoke with a certain irony which reflected the spent light of old illusions, and others who had a kind of wistfulness in their eyes, as though searching for the unattainable happiness. The Tired Business Man as a husband has his limitations, like most men. Often his long hours of absence, at the office and his dullness at home make his wife rather companionless, and her novel-reading habits tend to emphasize the loss, and force upon her mind the desire for more satisfying comradeship. Generally some man who enters her circle seems to offer the chance of this. He has high ideals, or the pose of

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them. His silences seem suggestive of deep unutterable thoughts—though he may be thinking of nothing more important than a smudge on his white waistcoat—he has a tenderness in his gray (or black, or brown) eyes which is rather thrilling to a woman chilled by the lack-luster look of the man who is used to her presence and takes her for granted. . . . The Tired Business Man ought to be careful, lest he should become too tired to enter into the interests of his wife and to give her the minimum of comradeship which all women demand. The American Woman of Society, outside the Catholic Church, which still insists upon the old law, seems to me quicker than most others to cut her losses in the marriage gamble, if she finds, or thinks she finds, that she is losing too heavily for her peace of heart. Less than women in European countries will she tolerate deceit or spiritual cruelty, and the law offers her a way of escape, expensive but certain, from a partnership which has been broken. Society, in New York at least, is tolerant to women who have dissolved their married partnership, and there is no stoning-sisterhood to fling mud and missiles at those who have already paid for error by many tears.

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Yet I doubt whether, in many cases, the liberty they find makes for happiness. There is always the fear of a second mistake worse than the first, and, anyhow, some unattached women I met, women who could afford to live alone, not without a certain luxury of independence, seemed disillusioned as to the romance of life, and the honesty of men, and their own chance of happiness. Their furs and their diamonds were no medicine for the bitterness of their souls, nor for the hunger in their hearts.

But I found a great class of women in America too busy, too interested, and too inspired by common sense to be worried by that kind of emotional distress—the middle-class women who flung themselves into war-work, as before, and now, in time of peace, the activities of charity and education and domestic life have called to them for service. There was a woman doctor I met who seemed to me as fine a type of American womanhood as one could have the luck to meet, and yet, in spite of uncommon ability, a common type in her cheery and practical character. When the war broke out her husband, who was a doctor also, was called to serve in the American army, and his wife, who had passed her

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medical examinations in the same college with him, but had never practised, carried on his work, in spite of four children. They came first and her devotion to them was not altered, but that did not prevent her from attending to a growing list of patients at a time when influenza was raging in her district. She went about in a car which she drove herself, with the courage and cheerfulness of a gallant soldier. In her little battlefield there were many tragedies, because death took away the youngest-born or the eldest-born from many American homes, and her heart was often heavy; but she resisted all gloomy meditations and kept her nerve and her spirit by—singing. As she drove her car from the house of one patient to another she sang loudly to herself, over the wheel, any little old song that came into her head—"Hey-diddle-diddle, the cat and the fiddle," or "Old King Cole was a merry old soul, and a merry old soul was he,"—to the profound astonishment of passers-by, who shook their heads and said, "It's a good thing there's going to be Prohibition." But she saved the lives of many women and children in time of plague—for the influenza reached the height of plague—and did not lose her

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sense of humor or her fine, hearty laugh, or her graciousness of womanhood. When "the army," as she called her husband, came back, she could say, "I kept your flag flying, old man, and you'll not find any difference at home." I saw the husband and wife in their home together. While friends were singing round the piano, these two held hands like young lovers, away back in a shady corner of the room.

I met another husband and wife who interested me as types of American life, though not in their home. It was at a banquet attended by about two hundred people. The husband was the chairman of the party, and he had a wonderful way of making little speeches in which he called upon distinguished people to talk to the company, revealing in each case the special reason why that man or woman should have a hearing. He did this with wit and knowledge, and in each case indeed it was a privilege to hear the speaker who followed, because all the men and women here were engaged in some social work of importance in the life of great American cities, and were idealists who had put their theories into practice by personal service and self-sacrifice. The little man who

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was the chairman paid a compliment to his own wife, and I found she was sitting by my side. She had gray hair, but very young, bright, humorous eyes, and an almost terrible truthfulness of speech. I was startled by some things she said about the war, and the psychology of men and women under the spell of war. They were true, but dangerous to speak aloud as this woman spoke them. Later, she talked of the heritage of hatred that had been bequeathed by war to the people of the world. "Let us kill hatred," she said. "It is the survival of the cave instinct in man which comes out of its hiding-places under the name of patriotism and justice." I do not know what link there was between this and some other thought which prompted her to show me photographs of two big, sturdy boys who, she told me, were her adopted children. It was a queer, touching story, about these children. "I adopted them not for their sake, but for mine," she said. She was a lonely woman, well married, with leisure and money, and the temptation of selfishness. It was to prevent selfishness creeping into her heart that she sent round to an orphanage for two boy-babies. They were provided, and she

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brought them up as her own, and found—so she assured me—that they grew up with a marked likeness in feature to herself and her sisters. She had a theory about that—the idea that by some kind of predestination souls reach through space to one another, and find the home where love is waiting for them. I was skeptical of that, having known the London slums, but I was interested in the practical experience of the bright little American woman, who “selfishly,” as she said, to cure selfishness, had given two abandoned babies of the world the gift of love, and a great chance in the adventure of life. She was a tremendous protagonist of environment against the influence of heredity. “Environment puts it over heredity all the time,” she said.

This special charity on her part is not typical of American women, who do not, any more than women of other countries, go about adopting other people’s babies, but I think that her frankness of speech to a stranger like myself, and her curious mixture of idealism and practicality, combined with a certain shrewdness of humor, are qualities that come to people in America. She herself, indeed, is a case of “environment,” be-

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cause she is foreign in blood, and American only by marriage.

In New York I had the advantage of meeting one lady who seemed to me typical of the old-fashioned "leaders" of American society such as Henry James described in his novels. She lives in one of the great mansions along Fifth Avenue, and the very appearance of her butler is a guaranty of riches and respectability. She made no disguise of her wealth, and was proud of it in a simple way, as an English aristocrat is proud of his ancestry and family treasures. But she acknowledges its responsibilities and takes them seriously with a sense of duty. She had received lessons in public speaking, in order to hold her own at committee meetings, and she doles out large sums in charity to public institutions and deserving cases, with a grim determination to unmask the professional beggar and the fraudulent society. She seemed to have a broad-hearted tolerance for the younger generation and a special affection for boys of all ages, whom she likes to feed up, and to keep amused by treating them to the circus or the "movies"; but I fancy that she is a stern disciplinarian with her family as well as her servants, and

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that her own relatives stand in awe of this masterful old lady who has a high sense of honor, and demands obedience, honesty, and service from those who look for her favors and her money. I detected a shrewd humor in her and an abiding common sense, and at her own dinner-table she had a way of cross-examining her guests, who were men of political importance and women of social influence, like a judge who desires to get at the evidence without listening to unnecessary verbiage. She is the widow of a successful business man, but I perceived in her the sense of personal power and family traditions which belonged to the old type of dowager-duchess in England. Among butterfly women of European cities she would appear an austere and terrible figure in her virtue and her diamonds, but to small American boys, eating candies at her side in the circus, she is the kind and thoughtful aunt.

It was in Boston that I met some other types of American women, not long enough to know them well, but enough to see superficial differences of character between them and their friends of New York. Needless to say, I had read a good deal about Boston before going there. In England the Bos-

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tonian tradition is familiar to us by the glory of such masters as Oliver Wendell Holmes, Emerson, Thoreau, and Nathaniel Hawthorne, so that I had a friendly feeling when I went about the city and saw its streets and prim houses, reminiscent of Cheltenham and other English towns of ancient respectability and modern culture. After a lecture there many Bostonians came onto the platform, and I heard at once a difference in accent from the intonation of New York. It was a little more precise, with a careful avoidance of slang phrases. The people who spoke to me were earnest souls, with an idealism which seemed to lift them above the personal prejudices of party politics. I should imagine that some of them are republican rather than democratic in instinct, but those at least who were in my audience supported the idea of the League of Nations, and for that reason did not wish to see President Wilson boiled in oil or roasted at a slow fire. From my brief glimpses of Boston society I should imagine that the Puritan spirit still lingers there among the "best families" and that in little matters of etiquette and social custom they adhere to the rules of the Early Victorian era of English life.

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I was convinced of this by one trivial incident I observed in a hotel at Boston. A lady, obviously in transit from New York, by the public way in which she used her powder-puff, and by a certain cosmopolitan easiness of manner, produced a gold cigarette-case from her muff, and began to smoke without thinking twice about it. She had taken just three whiffs when a colored waiter approached in the most deferential manner and begged her to put out her cigarette, because smoking was not allowed in the public rooms. The lady from New York looked amazed for a moment. Then she laughed, dropped her cigarette into her coffee-cup, and said: "Oh yes— I guess I forgot I was in Boston!" In that word Boston she expressed a world of propriety, conventional morality, and social austerity, a long, long way from the liberty of New York. I had been told that a Boston audience would be very cold and unenthusiastic, not because they would be out of sympathy with the lecturer, but because they were "very English" in their dislike of emotional expression. My experience was not like that, as I was relieved to find, and, on the contrary, those Bostonians at the Symphony Hall applauded

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with most generous warmth and even rose and cheered when I had finished my story of the heroic deeds of English soldiers. It was a Boston girl who made the *apologia* of her people. "I am sure," she said, "that all those men and women who rose to applaud went down on their knees that night and asked God to forgive them for having broken their rule of life."

No doubt Boston society, as far as it includes the old families rooted in it for generations, is conservative in its point of view, and looks askance at noisy innovations like modern American dances, jazz bands, and the jolly vulgarities of youth. But, judging from my passing glimpses of college girls in the town, I should say that youth puts up a healthy opposition to the "old foggy" philosophy, and breaks the conventions now and then with a crash. One girl I met suggests to me that Boston produces character by intensive culture, and is apt to be startled by the result. Her father was a well-known lawyer, and she inherited his gift of learning and logic, so that when he died she had the idea of carrying on his work. The war was on, and somewhere over on the western front was a young English soldier whom she

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had met on board ship and might, according to the chances of war, never meet again. Anyhow, she was restless, and desired work. She decided to study for the law examinations and to be called to the bar; and to keep her company, her mother, who was her best comrade, went into college with her, and shared her rooms. I like that idea of the mother and daughter reading and working together. It seems to me a good picture. In due time she was called to the bar, and entered the chambers where her father had worked, and did so well that a great lawyer who gave her his cases to prepare spoke rare words of praise about her. Then the war ended, one day, quite suddenly, the young English soldier arrived in Boston, and, after a few preliminary inquiries as to his chance of luck, said, "When shall we get married?" He was in a hurry to settle down, and the mother of the girl was scared by his grim determination to carry her comrade away. Yet he was considerate. "I should hate to cause your mother any worry by hurrying things on so fast as Monday," he said. "Let us make it Tuesday." But the wedding took place on the Saturday before the Tuesday, and the young lady barrister of

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Boston was whisked away four days after the English officer came to America with a dream in his heart of which he desired the fulfilment. Boston was startled. This romance was altogether too rapid for its peace of mind. Why, there was no time to buy the girl a wedding-present! . . . The street boys of Boston were most startled by the English officer's best man—his brother—whose tall hat, tail-coat, and white spats were more wonderful than anything they had seen before.

I was not long enough in many towns of America to detect their various characteristics. Philadelphia, I was told in New York, was so slow that it was safe for people to fall out of windows—they just wafted down like gossamer—but I found it a pleasant, bustling place, with a delightful Old World atmosphere, like a bit of Queen Anne-England, round Independence Hall. . . . Pittsburgh by night, looking down on its blast-furnaces from a hill outside, appeared to me like a town behind the battle-lines under heavy gun-fire, and I am convinced that the workers in those factories are in the front-line trenches of life and deserve gold medals for their heroism. I had not

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been in the town ten minutes before a young lady with the poetical name of Penelope rang me up on the telephone and implored me to take a walk out by night to see this strange and wonderful picture, and I was glad of her advice, though she did not offer to go as my guide. Another girl made herself acquainted, and I found she has a hero-worship for a fellow war correspondent, once of Pittsburgh, whose career she had followed through many battlefields.

I saw Washington in glamorous sunlight under a blue sky, and found my spirit lifted up by the white beauty of its buildings and the spaciousness of its public gardens. I had luncheon with the British ambassador, curious to find myself in an English household, with people discussing America from the English point of view in the political heart of the United States; and I visited the War College and met American generals and officers in the very brain-center of that great army which I had seen on the roads of France and on the battlefields. This was the University of War as far as the American people are concerned, and there were diagrams on the blackboards in the lecture-hall describing the strategy of the western front,

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while in the library officers and clerks were tabulating the history of the great massacre in Europe for future guidance, which by the grace of God and the League of Nations will be unnecessary for generations to come. I talked with these officers and found them just such earnest, serious scientific men as I had met in American Headquarters in France, where they were conducting war, not in our casual, breezy way, but as school-masters arranging a college demonstration, and overweighted by responsibility. It was in a room in the Capitol that I met one little lady with a complete geographical knowledge of the great halls and corridors of that splendid building, and an Irish way with her in her dealings with American Congressmen and Senators. Before the war I used to meet her in a little drawing-room not far away from Kensington Palace, London, and I imagined in my innocence that she was exclusively interested in literature and drama. But in one of the luncheon-rooms of the Capitol—where I lined up at the counter for a deep-dish pie from a colored waitress—I found that she was dealing with more inflammable articles than those appearing in newspaper columns, being an organ-

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izing secretary of the Sinn Fein movement in the United States. She was happy in her work, and spoke of Irish rebellion in that bright and placid way which belongs, as I have often noticed, to revolutionary spirits who help to set nations on fire and drench the world in blood. Anybody looking at her eating that deep-dish pie in the luncheon-room of the American Houses of Parliament would have put her down as a harmless little lady, engaged, perhaps, in statistical work on behalf of Prohibition. But I knew the flame in her soul, kindled by Irish history, was of the same fire which I saw burning in the eyes of great mobs whom I saw passing one day in procession down Fifth Avenue, with anti-English banners above their heads.

I should have liked to see more of Chicago. There seemed to me in that great city an intense intellectual activity, of conscious and deliberate energy. Removed by a thousand miles from New York with its more cosmopolitan crowds and constant influx of European visitors, it is self-centered and independent, and out of its immense population there are many minds emerging to make it a center of musical, artistic, and educational life, apart altogether from its business dynam-

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ics. I became swallowed up in the crowds along Michigan Avenue, and was caught in the breeze that blew stiffly down the highway of this "windy city," and studied the shops and theaters and picture-palaces with a growing consciousness that here was a world almost as great as New York and, I imagine, more essentially American in character and views. That first morning of my visit I was the guest of a club called the Cliff-dwellers, where the chairman rapped for order on the table with a club that might have protected the home of Prehistoric Man, and addressed a gathering of good fellows who, as journalists, authors, painters, and musicians, are farthest removed from that simple child of nature who went out hunting for his dinner, and bashed his wife when she gnawed the meatiest bone. It was in the time of armistice, and these men were deeply anxious about the new problems which faced America and about the reshaping of the world's philosophy. They were generous and honest in their praise of England's mighty effort in the war, and they were enthusiastic to a man in the belief that an Anglo-American alliance was the best guaranty of the League of Nations, and the best hope for the safety

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of civilization. I came away with the belief that out of Chicago would come help for the idealists of our future civilization, out of Chicago, whatever men may say of its Pit, and its slaughter-yards, and its jungle of industry and life. For on the walls of the Cliff-dwellers were paintings of men who have beauty in their hearts, and in the eyes of the men I met was a look of gravity and thoughtfulness in face of the world's agonies and conflict. But I was aware, also, that among the seething crowds of that city were mobs of foreign-born people who have the spirit of revolution in their hearts, and others who demand more of the joy of life and less of its struggle, and men of baseness and brutality, coarsened by the struggle through which they have to push and thrust in order to get a living. I listened to Germans and foreign Jews in some of the streets of Chicago, and saw in imagination the flames and smoke of passion that stir above the Melting-pot.

I have memories in Chicago of a little theatrical manager who took my arm and pressed it tight with new-born affection, and said: "My dearie, I'm doing colossal business—over two thousand dollars a night! It's broken all the records. I go about

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singing with happiness." Success had made a poet of him. In a private suite of rooms in the most luxurious hotel of Chicago I met one of the theatrical stars of America, and studied her type as one might gaze at a rare bird. She was a queer little bird, I found, with a childish and simple way of speech which disguised a little her immense and penetrating knowledge of human nature as it is found in "one-night stands," in the jungle of life behind the scenes, and in her own grim and gallant fight for fame. Fame had come to her suddenly and overwhelmingly, in Chicago, and New York was waiting for her. The pride of her achievement thrilled her to the finger-tips, and she was as happy as a little girl who has received her first doll as a birthday-present. She talked to me about her technic, about the way in which she had lived in her part before acting it, so that she felt herself to be the heroine in body and soul. But what I liked best—and tried to believe—was her whispered revelation of her ultimate ambition—and that was a quiet marriage with a boy who was "over there," if he did not keep her waiting too long. Marriage, and not fame, was what she wanted most (so she said), but

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she was going to be very, very careful to make the right one. She had none of the luxurious splendor of those American stars who appear in fiction and photographs. She was a bright little canary, with pluck, and a touch of genius, and a shrewd common sense.

From her type I passed to others, a world away in mode of life—Congressmen, leaders of the women's suffrage societies, ex-governors, business magnates, American officers back from the front, foreign officers begging for American money, British propagandists—a most unlikely crowd—dramatic critics, shipbuilders, and the society of New York suburbs between Mamaroneck and Greenwich, Connecticut. At dinner-parties and evening receptions I met these different actors in the great drama of American life, and found them, in that time of armistice, desperately earnest about the problems of peace, intrigued to the point of passion about the policy of President Wilson, divided hopelessly in ideals and convictions, so that husbands and wives had to declare a No Man's Land between their conflicting views, and looking forward to the future with profound uneasiness because of the threat to the

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“splendid isolation” of the Monroe Doctrine—they saw it crumbling away from them—and because (more alarming still) they heard from afar the first rumblings of a terrific storm between capital and labor. They spoke of these things frankly, with an evident sincerity and with a fine gravity—women as well as men, young girls as fearlessly and intelligently as bald-headed business men. Many of them deplored the late entry of the United States into the war, because they believed their people would have gained by longer sacrifice. With all their pride in the valor of their men, not one of them in my hearing used a braggart word, or claimed too great a share in the honor of victory. There was fear among them that their President was abandoning principles of vital import to their country, but no single man or woman I met spoke selfishly of America’s commercial or political interest, and among all the people with whom I came in touch there was a deep sense of responsibility and a desire to help the world forward by wise action on the part of the United States. Their trouble was that they lacked clear guidance, and were groping blindly about for the right thing to do, in a

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practical, common-sense way. I had serious conversations in those assemblies, until my head ached, but they were not without a lighter side, and I was often startled by the eager way in which American middle-class society abandons the set etiquette of an evening party for charades, a fox-trot (with the carpets thrown back), a game of "twenty questions," or a riot of laughter between a cocktail and a highball. At those hours the youth of America was revealed. Its society is not so old as our tired, saddened people of Europe, who look back with melancholy upon the four years in which their young men perished, and forward without great hope. The vitality of America has hardly been touched by her sacrifice, and the heart of America is high.

III

THINGS I LIKE IN THE UNITED STATES

SOME Englishmen, I am told, go to the United States with a spirit of criticism, and search round for things that seem to them objectionable, taking no pains to conceal their hostile point of view. They are so hopelessly insular that they resent any little differences in social custom between American and English life, and sum up their annoyance by saying, "We don't do that sort of thing in England!" Well, that seems to me a foolish way of approach to any country, and the reason why some types of Englishmen are so unpopular in France, Italy, and other countries, where they go about regarding "the natives," as they call them, with arrogance in their eyes, and talk, as an English officer, not of that type, expressed it to me, "as though they had bad smells at the end of their noses." I am bound to say that during my visit to the United States I found much more to admire than to criticize,

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and perhaps because I was on the lookout for things to like rather than to dislike I had one of the best times of my life—in some ways the very best—and came away with respect, admiration, and gratitude for the American people. There are so many things I like in their character and way of life that I should be guilty of gushing if I put them all down, but although I have no doubt they have many faults, like most people in this world, I prefer to remember the pleasant, rather than the unpleasant, qualities they possess, especially as they left the most dominant impression on my mind.

I think every Englishman, however critical, would agree that he is struck at once, on his first visit to America, by the clean, bright, progressive spirit of life in the smaller towns beyond the turmoil of New York. I have already described the sensational effect produced upon one's imagination by that great city, and have given some glimpses of various aspects of the social life which I had the good fortune to see with untiring interest; but I confess that the idea of living in New York would affright me because of its wear and tear upon the nerves, and I think that the "commuters" who dwell in

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the suburbs have good sense and better luck. The realities of America—the average idea, the middle-class home, the domestic qualities upon which a nation is built—are to be found more deeply rooted in the suburbs and smaller towns than in the whirligig of Manhattan Island, to which a million and a half people, I am told, come every day, and from which, after business or pleasure, they go away. To me there was something very attractive in the construction of such places as Rye, Port Chester, Greenwich, and Stamford, an hour away from New York, and many other townships of similar size in other parts of the United States. I liked the style of their houses, those neat buildings of wood with overlapping shingles, and wide porches and verandas where people may sit out on summer days, with shelter from the sun; and I liked especially the old Colonial type of house, as I think it is called, with a tall white pillar on each side of its portico, and well-proportioned windows, so that the rooms have plenty of light, and as much air as the central-heating system permits—and that is not much. To English eyes accustomed to dingy brick houses in the suburbs of big cities, to the dreary squalor of some new

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little town which straggles around a filthy railway station, with refuse-heaps in undeveloped fields, and a half-finished "High Street," where a sweetstuff-shop, a stationer, and an estate agent establish themselves in the gloomy hope of business, these American villages look wonderfully clean, bright, and pleasant. I noticed that in each one of them there were five institutions in which the spirit of the community was revealed—the bank, the post-office, the school, the church, and the picture-palace. The bank is generally the handsomest building in the place, with a definite attempt to give it some dignity of architecture and richness of decoration. Inside it has marble pillars and panels, brass railings at the receipt of custom, a brightly burnished mechanism for locking up the safe, a tiled floor of spotless cleanliness. The local tradesman feels secure in putting his money in such a place of dignity, the local lady likes to come here in the morning (unless she has overdrawn her account) for a chat with the bank manager or one of his gentlemanly assistants. It is a social rendezvous dedicated to the spirit of success, and the bank manager, who knows the private business and the social adventures of

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his clients, is in a position of confidence and esteem. He is pleased to shake the fingertips of a lady through the brass railings; while she is pleased to ask him, "How do you like my new hat?" and laughs when, with grave eyes, he expresses sympathy with her husband. "Twenty years ago he was serving behind the counter in a dry-goods store. Now he has a million dollars to his credit." Everybody brightens at this story of success. The fact that a man starts as a butcher-boy or a bell-boy is all in his favor in social prestige. There is no snobbishness, contemptuous of humble origin, and I found a spirit of good-natured democracy among the people I watched in the local bank.

Competing with the bank in architectural dignity is the village post-office, generally of white stone, or wood, with the local Roll of Honor on the green outside, and, inside, a number of picture-posters calling to the patriotism of the American people to support the Liberty Loan—the fifth when I was there. Small boys at the counter are buying thrift stamps. Chauffeurs who have driven down from country houses are collecting the letters of the family from lockers, with private keys. College girls are exchanging



THE SOCIAL ATMOSPHERE OF AN AMERICAN POST-OFFICE

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confidences at the counters. I liked the social atmosphere of an American post-office. I seemed to see a visible friendliness here between the state and the people. Then there is the school, and I must say that I was overwhelmed with admiration for the American system of education and for the buildings in which it is given. England lags a long way behind here, with its old-fashioned hotch-potch of elementary schools, church schools, "academies for young gentlemen"—the breeding-grounds of snobs—grammar-schools, and private, second-rate colleges; all of which complications are swept away by the clean simplicity of the American state school, to which boys of every class may go without being handicapped by the caste system which is the curse of England. If the school to which I went at Montclair, or another at Elizabeth, New Jersey, or another at Toledo, is at all typical of American schools generally (and I think that is so), I take my hat off to the educational authorities of America and to the spirit of the people which inspires them.

The school at Montclair was, I remember, a handsome building like one of the English colleges for women at Oxford or Cambridge,

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with admirably designed rooms, light, airy, and beautiful with their polished paneling. The lecture-hall was a spacious place holding, I suppose, nearly a thousand people, and I was astonished at its proportions when I had my first glimpse of it before lecturing, under the guidance of the head-mistress and some of the ladies on her committee. Those women impressed me as being wise and broad-minded souls, not shut up in narrow educational theories, but with a knowledge of life and human nature, and a keen enthusiasm for their work. At Toledo I saw the best type of provincial school, and certainly as an architectural model it was beyond all words of praise, built in what we call the Tudor style, in red brick, ivy covered, with long oriel windows, so that it lifts up the tone of the whole town because of its dignity and beauty. Here, too, was a fine lecture-hall, easily convertible into a theater, with suitable scenery for any school play. It was a committee of boys who organized the lectures, and one of them acted as my guide over the school-building and showed me, among other educational arrangements, a charming little flat, or apartment-house, completely furnished in every detail in bed-

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room, sitting-room, and kitchen, for the training of girls in domestic service, cookery, and the decoration of the home. Here, as in many other things, the American mind had reached out to an ideal and linked it up with practical method. Equally good were the workshops where the boys are trained in carpentry and mechanics. . . . Well, all that kind of thing makes for greatness in a nation. The American people are not, I think, better educated than English people in the actual storing-up of knowledge, but they are educated in better physical conditions, with a brighter atmosphere around them in their class-rooms and in their playgrounds, and with a keener appreciation in the social influences surrounding the schoolhouse of the inherent right of every American boy and girl to have equal opportunities along the road to knowledge and success. It is this sense of opportunity, and the entire absence of snob privileges, which I liked best in these glimpses I gained of young America. . . .

I mentioned another institution which occupies a prominent place in every American township. That is the picture-palace. It is impossible to overrate the influence upon the minds and characters of the people

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which is exercised by that house of assembly. It has become part of the life of the American people more essentially than we know it in England, though it has spread with a mushroom growth in English towns and villages. But in the United States the picture-palace and "The Silent Drama," as they call it, are more elaborately organized, and the motion pictures are produced with an amount of energy, imagination, and wealth which are far in excess of the similar efforts in England. A visit to the "movies" is the afternoon or evening recreation of every class and age of American citizenship. It is a democratic habit from which few escape. Outside the picture-palace in a little town like Stamford one sees a number of expensive motor-cars drawn up while the lady of leisure gets her daily dose of "romance" and while her chauffeur, in the gallery, watches scenes of high life with the cynical knowledge of a looker-on. Nursemaids alleviate the boredom of domestic service by taking their children to see the pictures for an hour or two, and small boys and girls, with candy or chewing-gum to keep them quiet, puzzle out the meaning of marvelous melodrama, wonder why lovers do such strange things in

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their adventures on the way to marriage; and they watch with curiosity and surprise the ghastly grimaces of "close-up" heroines in contortions of amorous despair, and the heaving breasts, the rolling eyes, and the sickly smiles of padded heroes, who are suffering, temporarily, from thwarted affection. The history of the world is ransacked for thrilling dramas, and an American audience watches all the riotous splendor and licentiousness of Babylon or ancient Rome, while Theda Bara, the Movie Queen, writhes in amorous ecstasy, or poisons innumerable lovers, or stings herself to death with serpents. Royalists and Roundheads, Pilgrim Fathers and New England witches, the French Revolution and the American Civil War, are phases of history which provide endless pictures of "soul-stirring interest"; but more popular are domestic dramas of modern life, in which the luxury of our present civilization, as it is imagined and exaggerated by the movie managers, reveal to simple folk the wickedness of wealthy villains, the dangers of innocent girlhood, and the appalling adventures of psychology into which human nature is led when "love" takes possession of the heart. It is impos-

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sible to say what effect all that has upon the mentality of America. The utter falsity of it all, the treacly sentiment of the "love" episodes, and the flaming vice of the vicious, would have a perverting influence on public imagination if it were taken seriously. But I suppose that the common sense of American people reacts against the absurdity of these melodramas after yielding to the sensation of them. Yet I met one lady who told me she goes every free afternoon to one of these entertainments, with a deliberate choice of film-plays depicting passion and caveman stuff "in order to get a thrill before dinner to relieve the boredom of domesticity." That seems to me as bad as the drug habit, and must in the long run sap the moral and spiritual foundations of a woman's soul. Fortunately, there is a tendency now among the "movie merchants" to employ good authors who will provide them with simple and natural plots, and in any case there is always Charlie Chaplin for laughter, and pictures of scenery and animal life, and the news of the week depicting scenes of current history in all parts of the world. It would be absurd as well as impossible to abolish the film-picture as an influence in American

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life, and I dare say that, balancing good with bad, the former tips the swing, because of an immense source of relaxation and entertainment provided by the picture-palace in small communities.

What appealed to me more in my brief study of American social life outside New York was another popular institution known as the roadside inn. In some way it is a conscious endeavor to get back to the simplicity and good cheer of old-fashioned times, when the grandfathers and grandmothers of the present generation used to get down from their coaches when the horses were changed, or the snowdrifts were deep, and go gladly to the warmth of a log fire, in a wayside hostelry, while orders were given for a dinner of roast duck, and a bowl of punch was brewed by the ruddy-faced innkeeper. It is a tradition which is kept fresh in the imagination of modern Americans by the genius of Charles Dickens, Washington Irving, and a host of writers and painters who reproduce the atmosphere of English life in the days of coaching, highwaymen, romance, and roast beef. The spirit of Charles Dickens is carefully suggested to all wayfarers in one roadside inn I visited, about an hour away from

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New York, and called "The Pickwick Inn." It is built in the style of Tudor England, with wooden beams showing through its brickwork and windows divided into little leaded panes, and paneled rooms furnished with wooden settles and gate-leg tables. Colored prints depicting scenes in the immortal history of Mr. Pickwick brighten the walls within. Outside there swings a sign-board such as one sees still outside country inns standing on the edge of village greens in England. I found it a pleasant place, where one could talk better with a friend than in a gilded restaurant of New York, with a jazz band smiting one's eardrums; and the company there was interesting. In spite of the departure of coaching days, which gave life and bustle to the old inns of the past, the motor-car brings travelers and a touch of romance to these modern substitutes. There were several cars outside the "Pickwick," and I guessed by the look of the party within that they had come from New York for a country outing, a simple meal, and private conversation. "Better a dinner of herbs where love is—" Under the portrait of Mr. Pickwick in a quiet corner of one of the old-fashioned rooms a young man

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and woman sat with their elbows on the table and their chins propped in the palms of their hands, and their faces not so far away that they had any need to shout to each other the confidences which made both pairs of eyes remarkably bright. The young man was one of those square-shouldered, clean-shaven, gray-eyed fellows whom I came to know as a type on the roads to Amiens and Albert. The girl had put her dust-cloak over the back of her chair, but still wore a veil tied round her hat and under her chin—a little pointed chin dug firmly into her palm, and modeled with the same delicacy of line as the lips about which a little smile wavered, and as the nose which kept its distance, with perfect discretion, from that of the young man opposite, so that the waiter might have slipped a menu-card between them. She had a string of pearls round her neck which would certainly have been the first prize of any highwayman holding up her great-grand-mamma's coach, and judging from other little signs of luxury as it is revealed in Fifth Avenue, I felt certain that the young lady did not live far from the heart of New York and had command of its treasure-houses. . . . Two other groups in the room,

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sitting at separate tables, belonged obviously to one party. They were young people, for the most part, with one elderly lady whose white hair and shrewd, smiling eyes made all things right with youthful adventure, and with one old foggy, bland of countenance and expansive in the waistcoat line, who seemed to regard it as a privilege to pay for the large appetites of the younger company. Anyhow he paid for at least eight portions of chicken okra, followed by eight plates of roast turkey and baked potatoes, and, not counting sundries, nine serves of deep-dish pie. The ninth, unequal, share went, in spite of warnings, protests, and ridicule from free-spoken companions, to a plump girl with a pigtail, obviously home from college for a spell, who said: "I guess I sha'n't die from overeating, though it's the way I'd choose if I had to quit. An appetite is like love. Its dangers are exaggerated, and seldom fatal." This speech, delivered in all solemnity, aroused a tumult of mirth from several young women of grown-up appearance—at least they had advanced beyond the pigtail stage—and under cover of this one of them deliberately "made up" her face till it bloomed like a rose in June. In another

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corner of the Pickwick Inn sat a lonely man whose appearance interested me a good deal. He was a man of middle age, with black hair turning white, and very dark, melancholy eyes in a pale, ascetic face. I have seen his type many times in the Café de l'Odéon on the "Latin" side of Paris, and I was surprised to find it in a roadside inn of the United States. A friend of mine, watching the direction of my gaze, said, "Yes, that is a remarkable man—one of the best-known architects in America, and, among other things, the designer of the Victory decorations of New York." He came over to our table and I had a talk with him—a strange conversation, in which this man of art spoke mostly of war, from unusual angles of thought. His idea seemed to me that peace is only a preparation for war, and that war is not the abnormal thing which most people think, but the normal, because it is the necessary conflict by which human character and destiny are shaped. He seemed to think that the psychology of the world had become twisted and weakened by too much peace so that the sight of armless or legless men was horrifying, whereas people should be accustomed to such sights and take them for

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granted, because that, with all pain and suffering, is the price of life. I disagreed with him profoundly, believing that war in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred is unnecessary and due to the stupidities of people who are doped by spell-words put upon them by their leaders; but I was interested in getting this viewpoint from a man whose whole life has been devoted to beauty. It seemed to me the strangest paradox. . . . A roadside inn in the United States is a good place for the study of psychology and social habits in America. One custom which happens here during winter and summer evenings is a local dance given by some inhabitant of the neighborhood who finds more spaciousness here for a party of guests than in his own homestead. The rugs and chairs are put away, and the floor is polished for dancing. Outside, the inn is decorated with colored lamps and lanterns, and a bright light streams through the leaded windowpanes across the road from New York. The metal of many machines sparkles in the shadow world beyond the lanterns. Through the open windows, if the night is mild, comes the ragtime music of a string band and the sound of women's laughter. Sometimes queer

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figures, like ghosts of history, pass through the swing-doors, for it is a fancy-dress dance in the inn, and there is a glimpse of Columbine in her fluffy white skirt, with long white stockings, and with her hand on the arm of a tall young Pierrot; while a lady of the court of Marie Antoinette trips beside the figure of a scarlet Devil, and a little Puritan girl of New England (two hundred years ago) passes in with Monsieur Beaucaire in his white-satin coat and flowered waistcoat and silk stockings above buckled shoes. I like the idea and the customs of the roadside inn, for it helps to make human society sweet and friendly in villages beyond the glare of America's great cities.

To study a people, however, one must see them in their homes, and I was fortunate in having friends who took me into their home life. When I went there it was at a time when American homes were excited and happy after the armistice, and when the soldiers who had been "over there" were coming back, with victory and honor. In many homes of the United States, scattered far and wide, there was not happiness, but sorrow, because in the victory march down Fifth Avenue there would be for some of the on-

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lookers one figure missing—the figure of some college boy who had gone marching away with smiling eyes and a stiff upper lip, or the figure of some middle-aged fellow who waved his hand to a group of small children and one woman who turned to hide her tears. There were empty chairs in the homesteads of the United States, and empty hearts on Armistice Day—and afterward. But I did not see them, and I thought of the many homes in England desolated by the appalling sacrifice of youth, so that in every town, and in every street, there are houses out of which all hope in life has gone, leaving behind a dreadful dreariness, an incurable loneliness, mocking at Victory. There was one home I went to where a mother of cheery babes waited for her man with an eager joy she did not try to hide. The smallest babe had been born while he was away, a boy baby with the gift of laughter from the fairy godmother; and there was great excitement at the thought of the first interview between father and son. All the community in the neighborhood of this house in Westchester County took a personal interest in this meeting when “the Major” should see his latest born, and when the wife should

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meet her man again. They had kept his memory green and had cheered up the loneliness of his wife by making a rendezvous of his house. She had played up wonderfully, with a pluck that never failed, and a spirit of comradeship to all her husband's friends, especially if he wore khaki and was far from his own folk. One was always certain of meeting a merry crowd at cocktail time. With some ceremony a party of friends were conducted to the cellar to see how a careful housewife with a hospitable husband got ahead of prohibition. . . . Then the Major came back, a little overwhelmed by the warmth of his greeting from old friends, a little dazed by the sharp contrast between war and peace, moved to his depths by the first sight of Peter, his boy baby. One day at dinner he described how he had heard the news of Peter in the war zone. He bought a bottle of champagne to celebrate the event—it was the only bottle to be had for love or money—and went round to the mess to call a toast. There were many officers, and the champagne did not give them full glasses, but in a sparkling drop or two they drank to the son of this good officer and good comrade. I was glad to get a glimpse of that

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American home and of the two small girls in it, who had the habit, which I find pleasant among the children of America, of dropping a bob courtesy to any grown-up visitor. The children of America have the qualities of their nation, simplicity, common sense, and self-reliance. They are not so bashful as English boys and girls, and they are free from the little constraints of nursery etiquette which make so many English children afraid to open their mouths. They are also free entirely from that juvenile snobbishness which is still cultivated in English society, where boys and girls of well-to-do parents are taught to look down with contempt upon children of the poorer classes. I sat down at table many mornings with a small boy and girl who were representative, I have no doubt, of Young America in the making. The boy, Dick, had an insatiable curiosity about the way things work in the world, and about the make-up of the world itself. To satisfy that curiosity he searched the *Children's Book of Knowledge*, the encyclopedias in the library, and the brain of any likely person, such as the Irish chauffeur and gardener, for scraps of useful information. In games of "twenty questions," played across the luncheon-table,

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he chose mountains in Asia, or rivers in Africa, or parts of complicated engines, putting the company to shame by their ignorance of geography and mechanics. For sheer personal pleasure he worked out sums in arithmetic when he wakened early in the morning. His ambition is to be an engineer, and he is already designing monster airplanes, and electrical machines of fantastic purpose—like, I suppose, millions of other small boys in America. The girl, aged eight, seemed to me the miniature representative of all American girlhood, and for that reason is a source of apprehension to her mother, who has to camouflage her amusement at this mite's audacity, and looks forward with a thrill of anxiety and delight to the time when Joan will put her hair up and play hell with boys' hearts. Joan has big, wondering eyes, which she already uses for cajolery and blandishment. Joan has a sense of humor which is alarming in an elf of her size. Joan can tell the most almighty "whoppers," with an air of innocence which would deceive an angel. Joan has a passionate temper when thwarted of her will, a haughty arrogance of demeanor before which grown men quail, and a warm-hearted affection for people who

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please her which exacts forgiveness of all naughtiness. She dances for sheer joy of life, lives in imagination with fairies, screams with desire at the sight of glittering jewels and fine feathers, and weeps passionately at times because she is not old enough to go with her mother to dinner in New York. In another ten years, when she goes to college, there will be the deuce of a row in her rooms, and three years later New York will be invaded by a pair of hazel eyes which will complicate, still further, the adventure of life east and west of Fifth Avenue. Those two young people go forth to school every morning, from a country house in Connecticut, in a "flivver" driven by the Irish chauffeur, with whom they are the best of friends. Now and again they are allowed the use of the Cadillac car and spread themselves under the rugs with an air of luxury and arrogance, redeemed by a wink from Dick, as though to say, "What a game—this life!" and a sweep of Joan's eyelashes conveying the information that a princess of the United States is about to attend the educational establishment which she is pleased to honor with her presence, and where she hopes to be extremely naughty to-day, just to make things hum.

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This boy and girl are good and close comrades between the times they pull each other's hair, and have a profound respect for each other in spite of an intimate knowledge of their respective frailties and sinfulness. Joan knows that Dick invariably gets his sums right, whereas she invariably gets them wrong. She knows that his truthfulness is impregnable and painful in its deadly accuracy. She knows that his character is as solid as a rock and that he is patient up to the point when by exasperation she asks for a bang on the head, and gets it. Dick knows that Joan is more subtle in imagination than he can ever hope to be, and that she can twist him round her little finger when she sets out deliberately thereto, in order to get the first use of the new toy which came to him on his birthday, the pencil which he has just sharpened for his own drawing, or the picture-book which he has just had as a school prize. "You know mother says you mustn't be so terrible selfish," says Joan, in answer to violent protests, and Dick knows that he must pay the price of peace. He also knows that Joan loves him devotedly, pines for him when he is away even for a little while, and admires his knowledge and efficiency with

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undisguised hero-worship, except when she wants to queen it over him, for the sake of his soul. I think of them in a little white house perched on flower-covered rocks, within sight of the Sound through a screen of birch trees. Inside the house there are some choice old bits of English and Italian furniture bought by a lady who knows the real from the false, and has a fine eye for the color of her hangings and her chintz-covered chairs. On cool nights a log fire burns in a wide hearth, and the electric lamps are turned out to show the soft light of tall fat candles in wrought-iron torches each side of the hearthstone. Galli-Curci sings from a gramophone between Hawaiian airs or the latest ragtime; or the master of the house—a man of all the talents and the heart of youth—strikes out plaintive little melodies made up “out of his own head,” as children say, on a rosewood piano, while the two children play “Pollyanna” on the carpet, and their mother watches through half-shut eyes the picture she has made of the room. It is a pretty picture of an American interior, as a painter might see it. . . .

In New York, as in London, it is the ambition of many people, I find, to seek out a country cottage and get back to the “simple

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life" for a spell. "A real old place" is the dream of the American business man who has learned to love ancient things after a visit to Europe, or by a sudden revolt against the modern side of civilization. The "real old place" is not easy to find, but I met one couple who had found it not more than thirty miles or so from Madison Square, yet in such a rural and unfrequented spot that it seemed a world away. They had discovered an old mill-house, built more than a hundred and fifty years ago, and unchanged all that time except by the weathering of its beams and panels, and the sinking of its brick floors, and the memories that are stored up in every crack and crevice of that homestead where simple folk wed and bred, worked and died, from one generation to another. The new owners are simple folk, too, though not of the peasant class, and with reverence and sound taste they decline to allow any architect to alter the old structure of the house, but keep it just as it stands. In their courtyard, on a Sunday afternoon, were several motor-cars, and in their parlor a party of friends from New York who had come out to this little old mill-house in the country, and expressed their

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ecstasy at its quaint simplicity. Some of them invited themselves to supper, whereat the lady of the mill-house laughed at them and said, "I guess you'll have to be content with boiled beans and salad, because my man and I are tired of the fatted calf and all the gross things of city life." To her surprise there was a chorus of "Fine!" and the daintiest girl from New York offered to do the washing-up. Through an open door in the parlor there was a pretty view of another room up a flight of wooden stairs. In such a room one might see the buxom ghost of some American Phoebe of the farm, with bare arms and a low-necked bodice, coiling her hair at an old mirror for the time when John should come a-courting after he had brushed the straw from his hair. . . .

I went into another country cottage, as old as this one and as simple as this. It stands in a meadow somewhere in Sleepy Hollow, low lying by a little stream that flows through its garden, but within quick reach, by a stiff climb, through silver beeches and bracken, and over gray rocks that crop through the soil, to hilltops from which one gazes over the Hudson River and the Sound, and a wide stretch of wooded country with

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little white towns in the valleys. Here in the cottage lives a New York doctor and his wife, leading the simple life, not as a pose, but in utter sincerity, because they have simplicity in their souls. Every morning the doctor walks away from his cottage to a railway which takes him off to the noisy city, and here until five of the evening he is busy in healing the sufferers of civilization and stupidity—the people who overeat themselves, the children who are too richly fed by foolish mothers, business men whose nerves have broken down by worry and work for the sake of ambition, society women wrecked in the chase of pleasure, and little ones, rickety, blind, or diseased because of the sins of their parents. The little doctor does not deal in medicine and does not believe in it. He treats his patients according to his philosophy of natural science, by which he gives their human nature a chance of freeing itself from the poison that has tainted it and getting back to normal self-healing action. He has devised a machine for playing waves of electricity through his patients by means of which he breaks up the clogging tissue of death in their cell life and regenerates the health of the cell system. He has made

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some startling cures, and I think the cheerful wisdom of the little man, his simple, childlike heart, and the clean faith that shines out of his eyes are part of the secret of his power. He goes back to his country cottage to tend his flowers and to think deeper into the science of life up there on the hilltop which looks across the Sound among the silvery beeches, where in the spring there is a carpet of bluebells and in the autumn the fire of red bracken. In spring and summer and autumn he rises early and plunges into a pool behind the shelter of trees and bushes, and before dressing runs up and down a stone pathway bordered by the flowers he has grown, and after that dances a little to keep his spirit young. . . . I liked that glimpse I had of the American doctor in Sleepy Hollow.

And I liked all the glimpses I had of American home life in the suburbs of New York and in other townships of the United States. I liked the white woodwork of the houses, and the bright sunlight that swept the sky above them, and the gardens that grew without hedges. I liked the good nature of the people, the healthiness of their outlook on life, their hopefulness in the future, their self-reliance and their sincerity of speech. I



I LIKED THE GREETING OF THE TRAIN CONDUCTOR

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liked the children of America, and the college girls who strolled in groups along the lanes, and the crowds who assembled in the morning at the local station to begin a new day's work or a new day's shopping in the big city at their journey's end. They had a keen and vital look, and nodded to one another in a neighborly way as they bought bulky papers from the bookstall and chewing-gum from the candy stall and had their shoes shined with one eye on the ticket office. I liked the greeting of the train conductor to all those people whose faces he knew as familiar friends, and to whom he passed the time o' day with a jesting word or two. I liked the social life of the American middle classes, because it is based, for the most part, on honesty, a kindly feeling toward mankind, and healthiness of mind and body. They are not out to make trouble in the world, and unless somebody asks for it very badly they are not inclined to interfere with other people's business. The thing I liked best in the United States is the belief of its citizens in the progress of mankind toward higher ideals of common sense; and after the madness of a world at war it is good to find such faith, however difficult to believe.

IV

AMERICA'S NEW PLACE IN THE WORLD

THE United States of America has a new meaning in the world, and has entered, by no desire of its own, into the great family of nations, as a rich uncle whose authority and temper must be respected by those who desire his influence in their family quarrels, difficulties, and conditions of life. Before the war the United States was wonderfully aloof from the peoples of Europe. The three thousand miles of Atlantic Ocean made it seem enormously far away, and quite beyond the orbit of those passionate politics which stirred European communities with Old World hatred and modern rivalries. It was free from the fear which was at the back of all European diplomacy and international intrigue—the fear of great standing armies across artificial frontiers, the fear of invasion, the fear of a modern European war in which nation against nation would be at one another's throats, in a

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wild struggle for self-preservation. America was still the New World, far away, to which people went in a spirit of adventure, in search of fortune and liberty. There was a chance of one, a certainty of the other, and it was this certain gift which called to multitudes of men and women—Russians and Russian Jews, Poles and Polish Jews, Czechs, and Bohemians, and Germans of all kinds—to escape from the bondage which cramped their souls under the oppression of their own governments, and to gain the freedom of the Stars and Stripes. To the popular imagination of Europe, America was the world's democratic paradise, where every man had equal opportunity and rights, a living wage with a fair margin and the possibility of enormous luck. A steady stream of youth flowed out from Ireland to New York, year after year, and Irish peasants left behind in their hovels heard of great doings by Pat and Mick, who had become the gentlemen entirely out there in the States, and of Kathleen and Biddy, who were piling up the dollars so fast that they could send some back to the old people and not feel the loss of them at all, at all.

The internal resources of America were so

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vast and the development of their own states so absorbed the energies of the people that there was no need of international diplomacy and intrigue to capture new markets of the world or to gain new territory for the possession of raw material. The United States was self-centered and self-sufficient, and the spirit of the Monroe Doctrine prohibiting foreign powers from any colonizing within the boundaries of the Republic was developed in popular imagination and tradition to a firm policy of self-isolation and of non-interference by others. The American people had no interest, politically, in the governments or affairs of other nations, and they desired to be left alone, with a "Hands off!" their own sovereign power. It was this reality of isolation which gave America immense advantages as a republic and had a profound influence upon the psychology of her citizens. Being aloof from the traditions of European peoples and from their political entanglements and interdependence, the United States could adopt a clear and straightforward policy of self-development on industrial lines. Her diplomacy was as simple as a child's copy-book maxim. Her ambassadors and ministers at European

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courts had no need of casuistry or Machiavellian subtlety. They had an exceedingly interesting and pleasant time reporting back the absurdities of European embassies, the melodrama of European rivalries, the backstairs influence at work in secret treaties, the assassinations, riots, revolutions, and political crises which from time to time convulsed various countries—and the corrupt bargainings and jugglings between small powers and great powers. The American representatives in Europe watched all this as the greatest game on earth, but far away from the United States, and without the slightest effect upon the destiny of their own country, except when it excited Wall Street gamblers. American diplomats were not weighted down by the fear of offending the susceptibilities of Germany or France or Italy or Russia, nor were they asked to play off one country against another, in order to maintain that delicate and evil mechanism known as “the balance of power”—the uniting of armed bands for self-defense or the means of aggression. The frontiers of America were inviolate and the Atlantic and Pacific seaboard were not open to sudden attack, like the boundaries between Germany

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and France, Turkey and Bulgaria, Italy and Austria, where fear of invasion was the undercurrent of all political and popular thought, and the motive power of all national energy, to the detriment of social progress, because of the crippling cost of standing armies and unproductive labor for the material of war. Nationally, therefore, the United States of America was in supreme luck because it could use its youth and resources with full advantage, free from menace and beyond all rivalry.

The character of the people responded to this independence of the Republic. The average American citizen, as far as I knew him, in Europe before the war, had an amused contempt for many institutions and social ideas which he observed in a continental tour. He was able to regard the hotchpotch of European nationalities and traditions from an aloof and judicial viewpoint. They seemed to him on the whole very silly. He could not understand why an invisible line on a road should make people on each side of the line hate each other desperately. He watched the march past of troops in France or Germany, the saluting of generals, the clicking of heels, the brilliant uniforms of officers, as

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a pageant which was utterly out of date in its application to life, and as a degradation of individual dignity. He did not link up the thriftiness of the French peasant—the desperate hoarding of his *petit sou*—with the old fear of invasion by German legions across the frontier, when the peasant might see his little farm in flames and his harvest trampled down by soldiers' boots. The American visitor observed the fuss made when one king visited another, and read the false adulation of the royal visitor, the insincere speeches at royal banquets, the list of decorations conferred upon court flunkies, and laughed at the whole absurdity, not seeing that it was all part of a bid for a new alliance or a bribe for peace, or a mask of fear, until the time came when all bids and bribes should be of no more avail, and the only masks worn were to be gas-masks, when the rival nations should hack at one another in a frenzy of slaughter. The American in Europe who came to have a look 'round was astonished at the old-fashioned ways of people—their subservience to "caste" ideas, their allegiance to the divine right of kings, as to the "Little Father" of the Russian people, and the "shining armor" of the German Kaiser,

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and their apparent contentment with the wide gulf between underpaid labor and privileged capital. He did not realize that his own liberty of ideas and high rate of wage-earning were due to citizenship in a country free from militarism and its crushing taxation, and free also from hereditary customs upheld by the power of the sword used in civil strife as well as in international conflict, by the imperial governments of Russia, Germany, and other powers whose social philosophy was no different, though less tyrannical in expression. The American said, "I like Europe as a peep-show, and it's a good place to spend money in; but we can teach you a few things in the United States; one of them is equality, and another is opportunity." He was right, and it was his luck. Because of those privileges many pilgrims of fortune went to America from all the countries of Europe, in a great tide of emigration, adopting American citizenship in most cases soon after sighting the Statue of Liberty—"old Lib.," as I heard her called. The United States received these foreigners in hundreds of thousands and became "the melting-pot" of races. The melting process, however, was not so rapid as some

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people imagined, and it was something of a shock to the States to discover a few years before the war, and with a deeper realization at the outbreak of war, that they had within their boundaries enormous populations of foreign-born citizens, Germans, Poles, Slavs of all kinds, Italians, and Austrians, who had not assimilated American ideas, but kept their speech, customs, and national sentiment. It was the vast foreign element which had to be converted to the American outlook upon the world tragedy which opened in August, 1914. This mass of hostile or unwilling people had to be dragged into action when America found that her isolation was broken, that she could no longer stand aloof from the rest of mankind, nor be indifferent to the fate of friendly nations menaced with destruction, nor endure a series of outrages which flouted her own power, nor risk the world supremacy of a military autocracy which, if triumphant in Europe, would very soon dictate to the United States. It is the miracle of the Stars and Stripes that when the American government conscripted all able-bodied youth and raised a vast and well-trained army, and sent it into the battlefields of France and

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Flanders, there was no civil outbreak among those foreign-born citizens, and with absolute obedience they took their places in the ranks, Germans to fight against their own flesh and blood, because of allegiance to a state which had given them liberty, provided they defended the ideals which belonged to the state—in this case the hardest test of loyalty, not without tragedy and agony and fear.

For the first time there was no liberty in the United States—no liberty of private judgment, no liberty of action, no liberty of speech. The state ruled with complete despotism over the lives of its citizens, not tolerating any infringements of its orders, because the safety of the state would be endangered unless victory were assured. That was an enormous shock, I am sure, to the psychology of all Americans, even to those most loyal to the state authority, and it has caused an entire change in the mental attitude of all American citizens toward the conditions and relationships of life, because that sense of utter liberty they had before the war is limited now by the knowledge that at any time the Republic of which they are citizens may call upon them for life itself

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and for all service up to that of death, and that, whatever their ideas should be, they may not refuse. In that way they have no longer an advantage over Frenchmen, or Germans, or Russians, or Italians, whom they pitied as men without liberty of souls or bodies. That is to say, they have to make surrender to the state of all things in the last resort, which is war—a law which many European peoples learned to their cost, many times before, and which America learned once in her own Civil War, but thought she could forget with other painful old things in the lumber-room of history.

The people of the United States have learned many other things during the last few years, when all the world has changed, and they stand now at the parting of the ways, looking back on the things they knew which they will never see again, and looking forward to the future, which is still doubtful to them in its destiny. I went to them on a visit during the period between armistice and peace, when mentally, I think, they were in a transition stage, very conscious of this place at the crossroads, and filled with grave anxiety, in spite of exultation at the power of their armies and the valor of their

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men who had helped to gain stupendous victory.

The things that had happened within the United States before and after its declaration of war had stirred them with passionate and complicated emotions. From the very outset of the Great War, long before the United States was directly involved, large numbers of Americans of the old stock, born of English, Irish, Scottish, or Dutch ancestry, were neutral only by order and not at all in spirit. Their sentiment toward France, based on the Lafayette tradition and their love of Paris and of French literature and wit, made them hate the invasion of northern France and eager to act as champions of the French people. Their old ties with England, the bond of speech and of blood, made them put aside any minor antagonisms which they had felt on account of old prejudice, and they followed with deep sympathy and anxiety the progress of the heroic struggle of British armies in the slaughter-fields. They were impatient for America to get into the conflict against German aggression. As the Germans became more ruthless of humane laws, more desperate in their attacks upon non-combatant as well as military popula-

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tions by sea and air and land, these Americans became sick and fevered at the thought of their own neutrality, and supported Colonel Roosevelt in his driving influence to get the United States into the war. They became more and more embittered with President Wilson, who adopted an academic view of the jungle scenes in Europe, dissociated the German people from the crimes of their war lords, and expounded a Christian philosophy of world politics which seemed like cowardice and humiliation of American pride to people stung to fury by German insults and outrages. These thoughts were beginning to seethe like yeast throughout masses of American people, especially in the East, but took a long time to reach and stir the great West and were resisted by the mentality of foreign-born populations, including the Jewish communities and the Irish. They were averse to war, and took a detached view of the struggle in Europe, which seemed to them too far away to matter to America. The German populations had a natural sympathy for their own race, much as some of them detested its militaristic ideals. There were, I imagine, also many intellectual men, not dragged down by the

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apathy of the masses, to whom "the war" seemed of less importance to the United States than the condition of the crops or the local baseball match. They felt that President Wilson's hesitations, long-drawn-out notes, and exalted pacifism were on nobler lines of thought than the loud-mouthed jingoism and bloodthirsty howlings of low-class newspapers and speakers.

The *Lusitania* was sunk, and a cry of agony and wrath went up from many hearts in the world at this new phase of war; but still the United States stayed out; and many Americans lowered their heads with shame and had a fire of indignation in their hearts because their President still temporized. They believed that the American people would have rallied to him as one man had he made that outrage the signal of war. They had no patience with his careful letter-writing, his anxiety to act as a moral mentor instead of as a leader of great armies in a fight against world criminals. . . . At last Wilson was forced to act, even his caution being overmastered by the urgent necessity of intervention on behalf of Great Britain and France and Belgium, panting and bleeding from every pore after three years of

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struggle; even his philosophy of aloofness being borne down by acts of war which wounded American interests and threatened American security. So the United States declared war, gathered its youth into great training-camps, and launched into the world struggle with slow but ever-increasing energy which swept the people with a mighty whirlwind of emotion.

The American people as a whole did truly enter into war in the spirit of crusaders. They sent out their sons as rescuers of stricken peoples fighting desperately against criminal powers. They had no selfish interests behind their sacrifice, and they did not understand that defeat of the nations allied against Germany would inevitably menace them with dire perils to their sovereign power, to their commercial prosperity, and to their ideals of civilization. Those things were true, but it was not because of them that the people of the United States were uplifted by a wonderful exaltation and that they put their full strength into preparing themselves for a long and bloody war. Every little home was turned into a Red Cross factory. Every young man of pluck and pride was eager to get the first call for

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active service in the field. Girls took on men's jobs, old ladies knitted until their eyes were dim. Hard business men gave away their dollars in bundles, denied themselves at meal-time so that Europe should be fed, tried by some little sacrifice to share the spirit of those who made offer of their lives. The materialism of which America had been accused, not unjustly, was broken through by a spiritual idealism which touched every class, and Americans did not shrink from sacrifice, but asked for it as a privilege, and were regretful that as a people they suffered so little in comparison with those who had fought and agonized so long. . . .

All this I heard when I went to America in the spring, between armistice and peace, and with my own eyes and ears I saw and heard the proof of it. Down Fifth Avenue I saw the march past of troops whom I had seen before marching along the roads of war to Ypres and Amiens, when the British army was hard pressed and glad to see these newcomers. In New York clubs I met young American officers who had been training with British staffs and battalions before they fought alongside British troops. And in American homes I met women who were still

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waiting for their men whom they had sent away with brave faces, hiding the fear in their hearts, and now knew, with thankfulness, that they were safe. Victory had come quickly after the entry of the American troops, but it was only the low braggart who said, "We won the war—and taught the English how to fight." The main body of educated people whom I met in many American cities said, rather: "We were the last straw that broke the camel's back. We were glad to share the victory, but we did not suffer enough. We came in too late to take our full share of sacrifice."

At that time, after the armistice and when Mr. Wilson was in Europe at the Peace Conference, the people I met were not so much buoyed up with the sense of victory as perplexed and anxious about the new responsibilities which they would be asked to fulfill. A tremendous controversy raged round the President, who baffled them by his acts and speeches and silences. When in an article which I wrote soon after my landing I said I was "all for Wilson" I received an immense number of letters "putting me wise" as to the failure of the President to gain the confidence of the American people

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and their grievous apprehensions that he was, out of personal vanity and with a stubborn, autocratic spirit, bartering away the rights and liberties of the United States, without the knowledge or support of the people, and involving them in European entanglements which they were not prepared to accept. This antagonism to the President was summed up clearly enough in some such words as those that follow:

Taft and Roosevelt quarreled; Wilson was born of it. Wilson is all there is to the Democratic party. He has had to dominate it; the brain of America is in the Republican camp. He refused to use this material when offered for the war. He would not allow Roosevelt to go to France and fight; he would not use General Wood, who was the "Lord Bobs" of this country in regard to preparedness. For the winning of the war we put party aside and the Congress gave Wilson unlimited power. (Lincoln put party aside and used the best he could get.) Now Mr. Wilson asks and gets very little advice. When he has a difficult question he secludes himself, except for Colonel House—and we know nothing about Colonel House. Mr. Wilson dominated America and no one objected; the war was being won. In the fall he saw, of course, victory, and was planning his trip abroad. He boldly asked for a Democratic Senate, which would give him control of the treaty-making power. He said, practically: "Everybody shows himself bigger than party. I will, too. All together now! But you prove it and give me a party Senate,

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not a Senate picked from the best brains of this America, but a Democratic Senate, so that I can have full power in the Peace Conference." The laugh that went up must have hit the stars, and we almost forgot the war to watch the election. Can you imagine Roosevelt in New York in this crisis? He held a monster meeting and said what he thought, through his teeth. "Unconditional surrender for Germany, no matter what it costs" (not idle words—Quentin's death in France had cost Roosevelt his famous boyishness of spirit), "and a Senate that will curb autocratic power in America." Then he told his hearers that they would not need a key to understand his speech. Now, power goes to people's heads. Mr. Wilson had changed. Time and again opposition in Congress failed. You would hear, "Wilson always wins." Always a dominating figure, he grew defiant, a trifle ruthless, heady. The American answer to Wilson was a Republican Senate, and the Senators were put there to balance him. When he decided to go to Europe he simply said he was going. He did not ask our approval, nor find out our wishes, nor even tell us what he was going to say, but did take over the cables and put them under government control. He made himself so inaccessible at that time that no one could get his ear. On his flying visit to New York he said that he returned to France to tell them that we backed him. Is that true? We don't know what we think yet. We haven't made up our minds. We will back him when he is frank and when we are convinced. We can't sign our souls away, all our wonderful heritages, without knowing all about it. . . . If we join a League of Nations, shall we prevent war? Or, if we join, shall we be absorbed and make the fight a bigger one?

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This, I believe, is a fair statement of the views held by many educated people in the United States at the time between armistice and peace. I heard just such words in the City Club of New York, in the Union League Club, from people in Boston and Philadelphia and Washington, and at many dinner-tables where, after the preliminary courtesies of conversation, there was a quick clash of opinion among the guests, husbands differing from wives, brothers from sisters, and friends from friends, over the personality and purpose of the President, and the practical possibilities of a League of Nations. The defenders of the President waived aside all personal issues and supported him ardently because they believed that it was only by the application of his ideals, modified, no doubt, by contact with the actual problems of European states, that a new war more devastating to the world than the one just past could be prevented, and that his obstinacy and singleness of purpose on behalf of a League of Nations pointed him out as the Man of Destiny who would lead humanity out of the jungle to a higher plane of civilized philosophy.

That was my own view of his mission and

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character, though now I think he failed at the Peace Conference in carrying out the principles of his own Fourteen Points, and weakened under the pressure of the governing powers of France, Belgium, and England, who desired revenge as well as reparation, and the death of German militarism under the heel of an Allied militarism based on the old German philosophy of might. The President failed largely because he insisted upon playing "a lone hand," and did not have the confidence of his country behind him, nor its understanding of his purpose, while he himself wavered in his principles.

America, during the time of my visit, was afraid of taking too strong a lead in the resettlement of Europe. So far from wishing to "boss the show," as some people suspected, most Americans had an unnatural timidity, and one count of their charge against Wilson was his obstinacy in his dealings with Lloyd George and Clemenceau. It was a consciousness of ignorance about European problems which made the Americans draw back from strong decisions, and above all it was the fear of being "dragged in" to new wars, not of their concern, which made them deeply suspicious of the League

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of Nations. In many conversations I found this fear the dominant thought. "If you people want to fight each other again, you will have to do without us," said American soldiers just back from the front. "No more crusades for us!" said others. "American isolation—and a plague on all your little nations!" said civilians as well as soldiers. Bitter memories of French "economy" spoiled for American soldiers the romance of the Lafayette tradition. "I lost my leg," said one man, "for a country which charged for the trenches where we fought, and for people who put up their prices three hundred per cent. when the American armies came to rescue them. France can go to hell as far as I'm concerned." . . . Nevertheless, it became more clear to thinking minds in America that the days of "isolation" were gone, and that for good or evil the United States is linked up by unbreakable bonds of interest and responsibility with other great powers of the world. Never again can she be indifferent to their fate. If another great convulsion happens in Europe, American troops will again be there, quicker than before, because her action in the last war and her share of the terms of peace have made her

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responsible in honor for the safety of certain peoples and the upholding of certain agreements. The Atlantic has shrunk in size to a narrow strip of water and the sky is a corridor which will be quickly traversed by aircraft before the next great war. But these physical conditions which are changing by mechanical development, altering the timetables of traffic, are of no account compared with the vast change that happened in the world when the Stars and Stripes fluttered in the fields of France and Flanders, when the bodies of America's heroic youth were laid to rest there under little white crosses, and when the United States of America entered into an intimate and enduring relationship with Great Britain and France.

The effect of this change is not yet apparent in its fullness. America is still in a state of transition, watching, studying, thinking, feeling, and talking herself into convictions which will alter the fate of the world. I believe with all my heart and soul that America's closer relationship with Europe will be all the better for Europe. I believe that the spirit of the American people is essentially and unalterably democratic, and that as far as their power goes it will be used against the

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tyranny of military castes and attempted oppression of peoples. I believe that the influence of this spirit, visible to me in many people I met, will be of enormous benefit to England and France, because it will be used as an arbitrating factor in the conflict which is bound to come in both those countries between the old régime and the new. The influence of America will be the determining power in the settlement of Ireland on a basis of common sense free from the silly old fetishes of historical enmities on both sides. It will intervene to give a chance of life to the German race after they have paid the forfeit for their guilt in the last war, and will, I am certain, react against the stupid philosophy of enduring vengeance with its desire to make a slave-state in Central Europe, which still animates bloody-minded men and women so passionate of revenge that they are kindling the fires of another terrible and devastating war. The United States of America is bound up with the fate of Europe, but its people will still remain rather aloof in mentality from the passions of European nations, and will be more judicial in their judgment because of that. Instinctively, rather than intellectually, Amer-

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icans will act in behalf of democratic rights against autocratic plots. They will not allow the Russian people to be hounded back to the heels of grand dukes and under the lash of the knout. They will give their support to the League of Nations not as a machinery to stifle popular progress by a combination of governments, but as a court for the reform of international laws and the safeguarding of liberty. Europe will not be able to ignore the judgment of America. That country is, as I said, the rich uncle whose temper they must consult because of gratitude for favors to come—and because of wealth and power in the world's markets.

America is at the threshold of her supreme destiny in the world. By her action in the war, when for the first time her strength was revealed as a mighty nation, full grown and conscious of power, she has attained the highest place among the peoples, and her will shall prevail if it is based upon justice and liberty. I believe that America's destiny will be glorious for mankind, not because I think that the individual American is a better, nobler, more spiritual being than the individual Englishman, Frenchman, or Russian, but because I see, or think I see, that

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this great country is inspired more than any other nation among the big powers by the united, organized qualities of simple, commonplace people, with kindness of heart, independence of spirit, and sincerity of ideas, free from the old heritage of caste, snobbishness, militarism, and fetish-worship which still lingers among the Junkers of Europe. They are a middle-class empire, untainted by imperial ambition or ancient traditions of overlordship. They are governed by middle-class sentiment. They put all problems of life to the test of that simplicity which is found in middle-class homes, where neither anarchy is welcome nor aristocratic privilege. America is the empire of the wage-earner, where even her plutocrats have but little power over the independence of the people. It is a nation of nobodies great with the power of the common man and the plain sense that governs his way of life. Other nations are still ruled by their "somebodies"—by their pomposities and High Panjandrams. But it is the nobodies whose turn is coming in history, and America is on their side. In that great federation of United States I saw, even in a brief visit, possible dangers that may spoil America's

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chance. I saw a luxury of wealth in New York and other cities which may be a vicious canker in the soul of the people. I saw a sullen discontent among wage-earners and home-coming soldiers because too many people had an unfair share of wealth. I met American Junkers who would use the military possibilities of the greatest army in the world for imperialistic adventures and world dominance. I heard of anarchy being whispered among foreign-born masses in American cities and passed over to other laborers not of foreign origin. In the censorship of news I saw the first and most ominous sign of government autocracy desiring to work its will upon the people by keeping them in ignorance and warping their opinions; and now and then I was conscious of an intolerance of free thought which happened to conflict with popular sentiment, as ruthless as in Russia during Czardom. I saw hatred based on ignorance and the brute spirit of men inflamed by war. But these were only accidental things, to be found wherever humanity is crowded, and after my visit to America I came away with memories, which are still strong in my heart, of a people filled with vital energy, kind in heart, sincere and

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simple in their ways of thought and speech, idealistic in emotion, practical in conduct, and democratic by faith and upbringing. The soil of America is clean and strong and free; and the power that comes out of it will, I think and hope and pray, be used to gain the liberties of other nations, and to help forward the welfare of the human family.

V

WHAT ENGLAND THINKS OF AMERICA

THE title I have chosen for this chapter is indiscreet, and, as some readers may think, misleading. At least it needs this explanation—that there is no absolute point of view in England about the United States. “England” does not think (a statement not intended to be humorous at the expense of my own people) any more than any nation may be said to think in a single unanimous way about any subject under the sun. England is a collection of individuals and groups of individuals, each with different points of view or shades of view, based upon certain ideals and knowledge, or upon passion, ignorance, elementary common sense, or elementary stupidity, like the United States and every country on earth.

It would convey an utterly false impression to analyze and expound the opinions of one such class, or to give as a general truth a few

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individual opinions. One can only get at something like the truth by following the drift of current thought, by contrasting national characteristics, and by striking a balance between extremes of thought. It is that which I propose to do in this chapter, frankly, and without fear of giving offense, because to my mind insincerity on a subject like this does more harm than good.

I will not disguise, therefore, at the outset, that after the armistice which followed the Great War huge numbers of people in England became annoyed, bitter, and unfriendly to the United States. The causes of that unkindness of sentiment were to some extent natural and inevitable, owing to the state of mind in England at that time. They had their foundations in the patriotism and emotion of a people who had just emerged from the cruelest ordeal which had ever called to their endurance in history. When American soldiers, sailors, politicians, and patriots said, "Well, boys, we won the war!" which, in their enthusiasm for great achievements, they could hardly avoid saying at public banquets or welcomes home, where every word is not measured to the sensibilities of other people or to the exact

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truth, English folk were hurt. They were not only hurt, but they were angry. Mothers of boys in mean streets, or rural villages, or great mansions, reading these words in newspapers which gave them irritating prominence, said, "So they think that we did nothing in the years before they came to France!" and some mothers thought of the boys who had died in 1914, 1915, 1916, 1917, and they hated the thought that Americans should claim the victory which so many English, Scottish, Irish, Canadians, Australians, New-Zealanders, South-Africans, and French had gained most of all by long-suffering, immense sacrifice, and hideous losses.

They did not know, though I for one tried to tell them, that all over the United States American people did not forget, even in their justified enthusiasm for the valor of their own men and the immense power they had prepared to hurl against the enemy, that France and England had borne the brunt of the war in the long years when Germany was at her strongest.

A friend of mine—an English officer—was in a New York hotel on Armistice Night, when emotion and patriotic enthusiasm were high—and hot. A young American mounted

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a chair, waving the Stars and Stripes. He used the good old phrase: "Well, boys, we won the war! The enemy fell to pieces as soon as the doughboys came along. England and France could not do the trick without us. We taught 'em how to fight and how to win!"

My friend smiled, sat tight, and said nothing. He remembered a million dead in British ranks, untold and unrecorded heroism, the first French victory of the Marne, the years of epic fighting when French and British troops had hurled themselves against the German lines and strained his war-machine. But it was Armistice Night, and in New York, and the "Yanks" had done jolly well, and they had a right to jubilation for their share in victory. Let the boy shout, and good luck to him. But an American rose from his chair and pushed his way toward my friend.

"I'm ashamed to hear such rant before British and French officers," he said, holding out his hand. "We know that our share is not as great as yours, within a thousand miles."

Those were chivalrous words. They represented the conviction, I am sure, of mil-

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lions of Americans of the more thoughtful type, who would not allow themselves to be swept away beyond the just merits of their national achievements, even by the fervor of the moment.

But in England people only knew the boast and not the modesty. Because some Americans claimed too much, the English of the lower and less intelligent classes belittled the real share of victory which belonged to America, and became resentful. It was so in France as in England. It was lamentable, but almost unavoidable, and when this resentment and this sullen denial of American victory became known in the United States, passed over the wires by newspaper correspondents, it naturally aroused counter-action, equal bitterness, and then we were in a vicious circle, abominable in its effect upon mutual understanding and liking.

All that, however, was limited to the masses, for the most part certainly, and was only used as poison propaganda by the gutter press on both sides of the Atlantic. Educated people in both countries understood the folly and squalor of that stuff, and discounted it accordingly.

What was more serious in its effect upon

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the intelligent classes was the refusal of the Senate to ratify the Peace Treaty and its repudiation of President Wilson's authority. I have already dealt in previous writings with that aspect of affairs, and have tried to prove my understanding of the American view. But there is also an English view, which Americans should know and understand.

At the time I am writing this chapter, and for some months previously, England has been irritated with the United States because of a sense of having been "let down" over the Peace Treaty and the League of Nations by American action. I think that irritation has been to some extent justified. When President Wilson came to London he received, as I have told elsewhere, the most enthusiastic and triumphant ovation that has ever been given to a foreign visitor by the population of that great old city. The cheers that rose in storms about him were shouted not only because his personality seemed to us then to have the biggest and most hopeful qualities of leadership in the world, but because he was, as we thought, the authorized representative of the United States, to whom, through him, we gave homage. It was only months afterward, when

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the Peace Treaty had been signed and when the League of Nations (Wilson's child) had been established, that we were told that Wilson was not the authorized representative of the United States, that the American Senate did not recognize his authority to pledge the country to the terms of the treaty, and that the signature to the document was not worth ten cents. That made us look pretty foolish. It made France and Italy and other powers, who had yielded in many of their demands in order to satisfy President Wilson's principles, feel pretty mad. It made a laughing-stock of the newborn League of Nations. It was the most severe blow to the prospects of world peace and reconstruction. In England, as I know, there were vast numbers of people who regarded the Peace Treaty as one of the most clumsy, illogical, and dangerous documents ever drawn up by a body of diplomats. I am one of those who think so. But that has nothing to do with the refusal of the Senate to acknowledge Wilson's signature.

The character of the clauses which created a series of international blunders leading inevitably to new wars unless they are altered during the next decade was not the cause of

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the Senate's "reservations." The American Senators did not seem to be worried about that aspect of the treaty. Their only worry was to safeguard the United States from any responsibility in Europe, and to protect their own traditional powers against an autocratic President. However right they may have been, it must at least be acknowledged by every broad-minded American that we in Europe were put completely "into the cart" by this action, and had some excuse for annoyance. All this is now past history, and no doubt before this book is published many other things will have happened as a consequence of the events which followed so rapidly upon the Peace of Versailles, so that what I am now writing will read like historical reminiscence. But it will always remain a painful chapter, and it will only be by mutual forbearance and the most determined efforts of people of good will on both sides of the Atlantic that the growth of a most lamentable misunderstanding between our two peoples in consequence of those unfortunate episodes will be prevented.

Another cause of popular discontent with the United States was the rather abrupt statement of Mr. Carter Glass, Secretary of

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the Treasury, that the United States would not grant any more loans to Europe so long as she failed to readjust her financial situation by necessary taxation, economy, and production.

The general (and in my opinion unjustified) anger aroused by this statement was expressed by a cartoon in *Punch* called "Another Reservation." It was a picture of a very sinister-looking Uncle Sam turning his back upon a starving woman and child who appeal to his charity, and he says: "Very sad case. But I'm afraid she ain't trying."

Mr. Punch is a formidable person in England, and by his barbed wit may destroy any public man or writing man who lays himself open to ridicule, but I ventured to risk that by denouncing the cartoon as unjust and unfair in spirit and fact. I pointed out that since the beginning of the war the United States had shown an immense, untiring, and inexhaustible generosity toward the suffering peoples of Europe, and reminded England how under Mr. Hoover's organization the American Relief Committee had fed the Belgian and French populations behind the German lines, and how afterward

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they had poured food into Poland, Serbia, Austria, and other starving countries. That challenge I made against Mr. Punch was supported by large numbers of English people who wrote to me expressing their agreement and their gratitude to America. They deplored the spirit of the cartoon and the evil nature of so many attacks in low-class journals of England against the United States, whose own gutter press was at the same time publishing most scurrilous abuse of us. But among the letters I received was one from an American lady which I will quote now, because it startled me at the time, and provides, in spite of its bitterness, some slight excuse for the criticism which was aroused in England at the time. If an American could feel like that, scourging her own people too much (as I think), it is more pardonable that English sentiment should have been a little ruffled by America's threat to abandon Europe.

I only wish with all my heart [she wrote] that the *Punch* cartoon is wholly undeserved, or that your kind "apologia" is wholly deserved. I have never been "too proud to fight," but a great deal too proud to wear laurels I haven't earned. Personally, I think the drubbing we are getting is wholesome and likely to do good. We have been given praise *ad nauseam*,

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and, to be honest, you can never compete with us on that ground. We can praise ourselves in terms that would silence any competitors. . . .

I wish, too, that I could believe that the "beggars from Europe" had either their hats or their bags stuffed with dollars. I'm afraid you have spoken to the Americans, not to the beggars. I was one myself. I went home in April, prouder of my country than I had ever been, jealous of its good repute, and painfully anxious that it should live up to its reputation. I fear I found that people were not only tired of generosity, but wholly indifferent to the impressions being so widely circulated in the press—that France had been guilty of every form of petty ingratitude, that the atrocities of Great Britain in Ireland outdid the Germans in Belgium and France. A minority everywhere was struggling against the tide, with dignity, and the generosity I had so securely counted on from my own people. But the collections being made for the Serbians, for instance, were despairingly small. Belgian Relief had been turned into Serbian Relief groups, and from New York to California I heard the same tale—and, alas, experienced it—people were tired of giving, tired of the war. In New York I was invited to speak before a well-known Women's Club—I was "a guest of honor." I accepted, and spoke for ten minutes, and a woman at a table near by begged me to take up an immediate contribution. I was not at all anxious to do so, for it seemed a very base advantage to take of a luncheon invitation, so I referred her to the president. A contribution was taken up by a small group of women, all fashionably dressed, with pearl or "near-pearl," and the result was exactly \$19.40. As there were between 200 and 300 women present in the ballroom, I was inexpressibly shocked, and sternly

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suggested that the president should announce the sum for which I should have to account, and her speech was mildly applauded. All through my trip I felt bewilderment. I had just come from Belgium and France, and the contrast oppressed me. I had the saddest kind of disillusionment, relieved by the most beautiful instances of charity and unselfishness.

Even in regard to the Relief of Belgium too much stress is laid on our generosity and a false impression has gone abroad—an impression nothing can ever eradicate. The organization of the B. R. F. was American, but Mr. Hoover never failed to underline how much of the fund came from Great Britain and Canada. In fact, the Belgian women embroidered their touching little phrases of gratitude to the Americans, as I myself saw, on *Canadian* flour sacks. During the first year or so the contributions of Americans were wholly incommensurate with our wealth and prosperity, and a letter from Gertrude Atherton a year after the war scourged us for our indifference even then.

Mr. Balfour's revelation that Great Britain had contributed £35,000,000 toward the relief of Austria, etc., made my heart go down still farther. I have tried to believe that my experience was due to something lacking in myself. People were so enchantingly kind, so ready to give me large and expensive lunches, dinners, teas—but they would not be induced to refrain from the lunches and contribute the cost of them toward my cause. . . .

I hope you will pardon this long effusion. Like most Americans who have served abroad I feel we came in too late, we failed to stay on the ground to clear up afterward, and now we are indulging in the most wicked propaganda against our late allies—France as well as England. Personally, I realize

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that if we had contributed twenty times as much I should still not feel we had done enough. If you were not so confirmed a friend of America, I could never write as I have done, but just because you reach such an enormous public, because your influence is so great, I am anxious that America should not be given undue praise—which she does not herself credit—and that the disastrous results of her policy (if we have one) should be printed clear for her to read and profit by.

That is a sincere, painful, and beautiful letter, and I think it ought to be read in the United States, not because I indorse its charge against America's lack of generosity—I cannot do that—but because it exculpates England and France of unreasoning disappointment, and is also the cry of a generous American soul, moved by the sufferings of Europe, and eager that her people should help more, and not less, in the reconstruction of the world. The English people did not take her view that the Americans had not done enough or were tired of generosity. It must be admitted by those who followed our press that, apart from two gutter journals, there was a full recognition of what the United States had done, and continual reminders that no policy would be tolerated which did not have as its basis Anglo-American friendship.

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Upon quite another level of argument is the criticism of American psychology and political evolution expressed by various English writers upon their return from visits to the United States, and a fairly close acquaintance with the character of American democracy as it was revealed during the war, and afterward. The judgment of these writers does not affect public opinion, because it does not reach down to the masses. It is confined rather to the student type of mind, and probably has remained unnoticed by the average man and woman in the United States. It is, however, very interesting because it seeks to forecast the future of America as a world power and as a democracy. The chief charge leveled against the intellectual tendency of the United States may be summed up in one word, "intolerance." Men like George Bernard Shaw, J. A. Hobson, and H. W. Massingham do not find in their study of the American temperament or in the American form of government the sense of liberty with which the people of the United States credit themselves, and with which all republican democracies are credited by the proletariat in European countries.

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They seem inclined to believe, indeed, that America has less liberty in the way of free opinion and free speech than the English under their hereditary monarchy, and that the spirit of the people is harshly intolerant of minorities and nonconforming individuals, or of any idea contrary to the general popular opinion of the times. Some of these critics see in the "Statue of Liberty" in New York Harbor a figure of mockery behind which is individualism enchained by an autocratic oligarchy and trampled underfoot by the intolerance of the masses. They produce in proof of this not only the position of an American President, with greater power over the legislature than any constitutional king, but the mass violence of the majority in its refusal to admit any difference of opinion with regard to war aims during the time of war fever, and the tyrannical action of the Executive in its handling of labor disputes and industrial leaders, during and after the war.

It is, I think, true that as soon as America entered the war there was no liberty of opinion allowed in the United States. There was no tolerance of "conscientious objectors" nor mercy toward people who from religious

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motives, or intellectual crankiness, were antagonistic to the use of armed might. People who did not subscribe to the Red Cross funds were marked down, I am told, dismissed from their posts, and socially ruined. Many episodes of that kind were reported, and startled the advanced radicals in England who had regarded the United States as the land of liberty. Americans may retort that we did not give gentle treatment to our own "conscientious objectors," and that is true. Many of them were put into prison and roughly handled, but on the other hand there was a formal, though insincere, acknowledgment that even in time of war there should be liberty of conscience, and a clause to that effect was passed by Parliament. In spite also of the severity of censorship, and the martial law that was enforced by the Defense of the Realm Act, there was, I believe, a greater freedom of criticism allowed to the press than would have been tolerated by the United States. Periodicals like the *Nation* and the *New Statesman*, even newspapers like the *Daily Mail* and the *Morning Post*, indulged in violent criticism of the conduct of the war, the methods of the War Cabinet,

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the action and military policy of leaders like Lord Kitchener, and the failure of military campaigns in the Dardanelles and other places. No breath of criticism against American leadership or generalship was admitted to the American press, and their war correspondents were censored with far greater severity than their English comrades, who were permitted to describe, very fully, reverses as well as successes in the fields of war.

What, however, has startled the advanced wing of English political thought more than all that is the ruthless way in which the United States government has dealt with labor disputes and labor leaders since the war. The wholesale arrests and deportations of men accused of revolutionary propaganda seem to these sympathizers with revolutionary ideals as gross in their violation of liberty as the British government's coercion of Ireland. These people believe that American democracy has failed in the essential principle which alone justifies democracy, a toleration of minorities of opinion and of the absolute liberty of the individual within the law. They say that even in England there is greater liberty, in spite of its mediæval

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structure. In Hyde Park on Sunday morning one may hear speeches which would cause broken heads and long terms of imprisonment if uttered in New York. Labor, they say, would rise in instant and general revolt if any of their men were treated with the tyranny which befalls labor leaders in the United States.

To my mind a great deal of this criticism is due to a misconception of the meaning of democracy. In England it was a tradition of liberal thought that democracy meant not only the right of the people to govern themselves, but the right of the individual or of any body of men to express their disagreement with the policy of the state, or with the majority opinion, or with any idea which annoyed them in any way. But, as we have seen by recent history, democratic rule does not mean individual liberty. Democracy is government by the majority of the people, and that majority will be less tolerant of dissent than autocracy itself, which can often afford to give greater liberty of expression to the minority because of its inherent strength. The Russian Soviet government, which professes to be the most democratic form of government in the world, is utterly

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intolerant of minorities. I suppose there is less individual liberty in Russia than in any other country, because disagreement with the state opinion is looked upon as treachery to the majority rule. So in the United States, which is a real democracy, in spite of the power of capital, there is less toleration of eccentric notions than in England, especially when the majority of Americans are overwhelmed by a general impulse of enthusiasm or passion, such as happened when they went into the war. The people of the minority are then regarded as enemies of the state, traitors to their fellow-citizens, and outlaws. They are crushed accordingly by the weight of mass opinion, which is ruthless and merciless, with more authority and power than the decree of a king or the law of an aristocratic form of government.

Although disagreeing to some extent with those who criticize the American sense of liberty, I do believe that there is a danger in the United States of an access of popular intolerance, and sudden gusts of popular passion, which may sweep the country and lead to grave trouble. Being the greatest democracy in the world, it is subject to the weakness of democracy as well as en-

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dowed with its strength, and to my mind the essential weakness of democracy is due to the unsteadiness and feverishness of public opinion. When the impulse of public opinion happens to be right it is the most splendid and vital force in the world, and no obstacle can stand against it. The idealism of a people attains almost supernatural force. But if it happens to be wrong it may lead to national and world disaster.

In countries like England public opinion is still controlled and checked by a system of heavy drag wheels, which is an intolerable nuisance when one wants to get moving. But that system is very useful when there are rocks ahead and the ship of state has to steer a careful course. Our constitutional monarchy, our hereditary chamber composed of men who do not hold their office by popular vote, our traditional and old-fashioned school of diplomacy, our social castes dominated by those on top who are conservative and cautious because of their possessions and privileges, are abominably hindering to ardent souls who want quick progress, but they are also a national safeguard against wild men. The British system of government, and the social structure rising by a

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series of caste gradations to the topmost ranks, are capable of tremendous reforms and changes being made gradually, and without any violent convulsion or break with tradition.

I am of opinion that this is not so in the United States, owing to the greater pressure of mass emotion. If, owing to the effects of war throughout the world, altering the economic conditions of life and the psychology of peoples, there is a demand for radical alteration in the conditions of labor within the United States, and for a different distribution of wealth (as there is bound to be), it is, in the opinion of many observers, almost certain that these changes will be effected after a period of greater violence in America than in England. The clash between capital and labor, they think, will be more direct and more ruthless in its methods of conflict on both sides. It will not be eased by the numerous differences of social class, shading off one into the other, which one finds in a less democratic country like mine, where the old aristocratic families and the country landowning families, below the aristocracy, are bound up traditionally with the sentiment of the agricultural popu-

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lation, and where the middle classes in the cities are sympathetic on the one hand with the just demands of the wage-earning crowd, and, on the other hand, by snobbishness, by romanticism, by intellectual association, and by financial ambitions with the governing, and moneyed, régime.

There are students of life in the United States who forecast two possible ways of development in the future history of the American people. Neither of them is pleasant to contemplate, and I hope that neither is true, but I think there is a shade of truth in them, and that they are sufficiently possible to be considered seriously as dangers ahead.

The first vision of these minor prophets (and gloomy souls) is a social revolution in the United States on Bolshevik lines, leading through civil strife between the forces of the wage-earning classes and the profit-holding classes to anarchy as fierce, as wild, and as bloody as that in Russia during the Reign of Terror.

They see Fifth Avenue swept by machine-gun fire, and its rich shops sacked, and some of its skyscrapers rising in monstrous bonfires to lick the sky with flames.

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They see cities like Pittsburgh, Detroit, and Cleveland in the hands of revolutionary committees of workmen after wild scenes of pillage and mob passion.

They see the rich daughters of millionaires stripped of their furs and their pearls and roughly handled by hordes of angry men, hungry after long strikes and lockouts, desperate because of a long and undecided warfare with the strong and organized powers of law and of capital.

Their vision is rather hazy about the outcome of this imaginary civil war, but of its immense, far-reaching anarchy they have no doubt, with the certainty that prophets have until the progress of history proves them to be false.

Let me say for myself that I do not pose as a prophet nor believe this particular prophecy in its lurid details. But I do believe that there may be considerable social strife in the United States for various reasons. One reason which stares one in the face is the immense, flaunting, and dangerous luxury of the wealthy classes in cities like New York. It is provocative and challenging to masses of wage-earners who find prices rising against them quicker than their

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wages rise, and who wish not only for a greater share of the proceeds of their labor, but also a larger control of the management and machinery of labor. The fight, if it comes, is just as much for control as for profit, and resistance on the part of capital will be fierce and ruthless on that point.

American society—the high caste of millionaires and semi-millionaires, and demi-semi-millionaires—is perhaps rather careless in its display of wealth and in its open manifestations of luxury. The long, unending line of automobiles that go crawling down Fifth Avenue and rushing down Riverside Drive, on any evening of the year, revealing women all aglitter with diamonds, with priceless furs round their white shoulders, in gowns that have cost the year's income of a working family, has no parallel in any capital of Europe. There is no such pageant of wealth in London or Paris. In no capital is there such luxury as one finds in New York hotels, mansions, and ballrooms. The evidence of money is overwhelming and oppressive. The generosity of many of these wealthy people, their own simplicity, good humor, and charm, are not safeguards against the envy and the hatred of those who strug-

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gle hard for a living wage and for a security in life which is harder still to get.

When I was in America I found a consciousness of this among the rich people, with some of whom I came in touch. They were afraid of the future. They saw trouble ahead, and they seemed anxious to build bridges between the ranks of labor and their own class. The wisest among them did not adopt the stiff-necked attitude of complete hostility to the demands of labor for a more equal share of profit and of governance. One or two men I met remembered the days when they were at the bottom of the ladder, and said, "Those fellows are right. . . . I'm going half-way to meet them."

If capital goes anything like half-way, there will be no bloody conflict in the United States. But there will be revolution, not less radical because not violent. That meeting half-way between capital and labor in the United States would be the greatest revolution the modern world has seen.

That, then, is one of the ways in which English observers see the future of the United States. The other way they suggest would be a great calamity for the world. It is the way of militarism—a most grisly thought!

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It is argued by those who take this line of prophecy that democracy is no enemy of war. On the contrary, they say, a democracy like that of the United States, virile, easily moved to emotion, passionate, sure of its strength, jealous of its honor, and quick to resent any fancied insult, is more liable to catch the war fever than nations controlled by cautious diplomats and by hereditary rulers. It is generally believed now that the Great War in Europe which ravaged so many countries was not made by the peoples on either side, and that it did not happen until the rival powers on top desired it to happen and pressed the buttons and spoke the spell-words which called the armies to the colors. It is probable, and almost certain, that it would not have happened at all if the peoples had been left to themselves, if the decision of war and peace had been in their hands, and if their passions had not been artificially roused and educated. But that is no argument, some think, against the warlike character of strong democracies. The ancient Greeks were a great democracy, but they were the most ardent warriors of their world, and fought for markets, sea supremacy, and racial prestige.

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So some people believe that the United States may adopt a philosophy of militarism challenging the sea-power of the British Empire, by adding Mexico to her dominions, and by capturing the strategic points of the world's trade routes. They see in the ease with which the United States adopted military service in the late war and the rapid, efficient way in which an immense army was raised and trained a menace to the future of the world, because what was done once to crush the enemy of France and England may be done again if France or England arouse the hostility of the American people. The intense self-confidence of the Americans, their latent contempt of European peoples, their quickness to take affront at fancied slights worked up by an unscrupulous press, their consciousness of the military power that was organized but only partially used in the recent war, and their growing belief that they are a people destined to take and hold the leadership of the world, constitute, in the opinion of some nervous onlookers, a psychology which may lead the United States into tremendous and terrible adventures. I have heard it stated by many people not wholly insane that the next world war will

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be mainly a duel between the United States and the British Empire.

They are not wholly insane, the people who say these things over the dinner-table or in the club smoking-room, yet to my mind such opinions verge on insanity. It is of course always possible that any nation may lose all sense of reason and play the wild beast, as Germany did. It is always possible that by some overwhelming popular passion any nation may be stricken with war fever. But of all nations in the world I think the people of the United States are least likely to behave in that way, especially after their experience in the European war.

The men who went back were under no illusions as to the character of modern warfare. They hated it. They had seen its devilishness. They were convinced of its idiocy, and in every American home to which they returned were propagandists against war as an argument or as a romance. Apart from that, it is almost certain that militarism of an aggressive kind is repugnant to the tradition and instinct of the American people. They have no use for "shining armor" and all the old shibboleths of war's pomp and pageantry which put a spell on

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European peoples. The military tradition based on the falsity of war's "glory" is not in their spirit or in their blood. They will fight for the safety of civilization, as it was threatened in 1914, for the rescue of free peoples menaced by brutal destruction, and they will fight, as all brave people will fight, to safeguard their own women and children and liberty.

But I do not believe that the American people will ever indulge in aggressive warfare for the sake of imperial ambitions or for world domination. Their spirit of adventure finds scope in higher ideals, in the victories of science and commerce, in the organization of every-day life, in the triumph of industry, in the development of the natural sources of wealth which belong to their great country and their ardent individuality. They believe in peace, if we may judge by their history and tradition, and non-interference with the outside world. Their hostility to the peace terms and to certain clauses in the League of Nations was due to a deep-seated distrust of entanglements with foreign troubles, jealousies, and rivalries, and the spirit of the United States, so far from desiring "mandates" over great populations outside the

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frontiers of its own people, harked back to the old faith in a "splendid isolation" free from imperial responsibilities. The people were perhaps too cautious and too reserved. They risked the chance they had of reshaping the structure of human society to a higher level of common sense and liberty. They made "reservations" which caused the withdrawal of their representatives from the council-chamber of the Allied nations. But that was due not merely, I think, to party politics or the passionate rivalry of statesmen. Truly and instinctively, it was due to the desire of the American people to draw back to their own frontiers and to work out their own destiny in peace, neither interfering nor being interfered with, according to their traditional and popular policy.

Apart from individual theorists, of the "cranky" kind, the main body of intellectual opinion in England, as far as I know it, looks to the United States as the arbitrator of the world's destiny, and the leader of the world's democracies, on peaceful and idealistic lines. There is a conviction among many of us—not killed by the controversy over the Peace Treaty—that the spirit of the American people as a whole is guided by an innate

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common sense free from antiquated spell-words, facing the facts of life shrewdly and honestly, and leaning always to the side of popular liberty against all tyrannies of castes, dynasties, and intolerance. Aloof from the historical enmities that still divide the nations of Europe, yet not aloof in sympathy with the sufferings, the strivings, and the sentiment of those peoples, the United States is able to play the part of a reconciling power, in any league of nations, with a detached and disinterested judgment. It is above all because it is disinterested that Europe has faith and trust in its sense of justice. It is not out for empire, for revenge, or for diplomatic vanity. Its people are supporters of President Wilson's ideal of "open covenants openly arrived at," and of the "self-determination of nations," however violently they challenge the authority by which their President pledged them to definite clauses in an unpopular contract. They are a friendly and not unfriendly folk in their instincts and in their methods. They respond quickly and generously to any appeal to honest sentiment, though they have no patience with hypocrisy. They are realists, and hate sham, pose, and falsehood. Give

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them "a square deal" and they will be scrupulous to a high standard of business morality. Because of the infusion of foreign blood in their democracy which has been slowly produced from the great melting-pot of nations, they are subject to all the sensibilities of the human race and not narrowly fixed to one racial idea or type of mind. The Celt, the Slav, the Saxon, the Teuton, the Hebrew, and the Latin strains are present in the subconsciousness of the American people, so that they are capable of an enormous range of sympathy with human nature in its struggle upward to the light. They are the new People of Destiny in the world of progress, because after their early adventures of youth, their time of preparation, their immense turbulent growth, their forging of tools, and training of soul, they stand now in their full strength and maturity, powerful with the power of a great, free, confident people.

To some extent, and I think in an increasing way, the old supremacy which Europe had is passing westward. Europe is stricken, tired, and poor. America is hearty, healthy, and rich. Intellectually it is still boyish and young and raw. There is the wisdom as well

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as the sadness of old age in Europe. We have more subtlety of brain, more delicate sense of art, a literature more expressive of the complicated emotions which belong to an old heritage of civilization, luxury, and philosophy. But I look for a Golden Age of literature and art in America which shall be like our Elizabethan period, fresh and spring-like, and rich in vitality and promise. I am bound to believe that out of the fusion of races in America, and out of their present period of wealth and power, and out of this new awakening to the problems of life outside their own country, there will come great minds, and artists, and leaders of thought, surpassing any that have yet revealed themselves. All our reading of history points to that evolution. The flowering-time of America seems due to arrive, after its growing pains.

Be that as it may, it is clear, at least, that the destiny of the American people is now marked out for the great mission of leading the world to a new phase of civilization. By the wealth they have, and by their power for good or evil, they have a controlling influence in the reshaping of the world after its convulsions. They cannot escape from that

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power, even though they shrink from its responsibility. Their weight thrown one way or the other will turn the scale of all the balance of the world's desires. People of destiny, they have the choice of arranging the fate of many peoples. By their action they may plunge the world into strife again or settle its peace. They may kill or cure. They may be reconcilers or destroyers. They may be kind or cruel. It is a terrific power for any people to hold. If I were a citizen of the United States I should be afraid—afraid lest my country should by passion, or by ignorance, or by sheer carelessness take the wrong way.

I think some Americans have that fear. I have met some who are anxious and distressed. But I think that the majority of Americans do not realize the power that has come to them nor their new place in the world. They have a boisterous sense of importance and prestige, but rather as a young college man is aware of his lustiness and vitality without considering the duties and the dangers that have come to him with manhood. They are inclined to a false humility, saying: "We aren't our brothers' keepers, anyway. We needn't go fussing

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around. Let's keep to our own job and let the other people settle their own affairs." But meanwhile the other people know that American policy, American decisions, the American attitude in world problems, will either make or mar them. It is essential for the safety of the world, and of civilization itself, that the United States should realize its responsibilities and fulfill the destiny that has come to it by the evolution of history. To those whom I call the People of Destiny I humbly write the words: Let the world have peace.

VI

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IT is only during the war and afterward that European people have come to know anything in a personal way of the great democracy in the United States. Before then America was judged by tourists who came to "do" Europe in a few months or a few weeks. In France, especially, all of them were popularly supposed to be "millionaires," or, at least, exceedingly rich. Many of them were, and in Paris, to which they went in greatest numbers, they were preyed upon by hotel managers and shopkeepers, and were caricatured in French farces and French newspapers as the "*nouveaux riches*" of the world who could afford to buy all the luxury of life, but had no refinement of taste or delicacy of sentiment. There was an enormous ignorance of the education, civilization, and temperament of the great masses of people in the United States, and it was an

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absolute belief among the middle classes of Europe that the "almighty dollar" was the God of America and that there was no other worship on that side of the Atlantic.

This opinion changed in a remarkable way during the war and before the United States had sent a single soldier to French soil. The cause of the change was mainly the immensely generous, and marvelously efficient, campaign of rescue for war-stricken and starving people by the American Relief Committee under the direction of Mr. Hoover.

In February of 1915 I left the war zone for a little while on a mission to Holland, to study the Dutch methods of dealing with their enormous problem caused by the invasion of Belgian refugees. Into one little village across the Scheldt 200,000 Belgians had come in panic-stricken flight from Antwerp, utterly destitute, and Holland was choked with these starving families. But their plight was not so bad at that time as that of the millions of French and Belgian inhabitants who had not escaped by quick flight from the advancing tide of war, but had been made civil prisoners behind the enemy lines. Their rescue was more difficult because of the needs of the German army, which

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requisitioned the produce and the labor of the peasants and work-people, so that they were cut off from the means of life. The United States was quick to understand and to act, and in Mr. Hoover it had a man able to translate the generous emotion in the heart of a great people into practical action. I saw him in his offices at Rotterdam, dictating his orders to his staff of clerks, and organizing a scheme of relief which spread its life-giving influence over great tracts of Europe where war had passed. My conversation with him was brief, but long enough to let me see the masterful character, the irresistible energy, the cool, unemotional efficiency of this great business man whose brain and soul were in his job.

It was in the arena of war that I and many others saw the result of American generosity. After the battles of the Somme, when the Germans fell back in a wide retreat under the pressure of the British army, many ruined villages fell into our hands, and among the ruins many French civilians. To this day I remember the thrill I had when in some of those bombarded places I saw the sign-boards of the American Relief over wooden shanties where half-starved men and women

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came to get their weekly rations which had come across the sea and by some miracle, as it seemed to them, had arrived at their village close to the firing-lines. I went into those places, some of which had escaped from shell-fire, and picked up the tickets for flour and candles and the elementary necessities of life, and read the notices directing the people how to take their share of these supplies, and thanked God that somewhere in the world—away in the United States—the spirit of charity was strong to help the victims of the cruelty which was devastating Europe.

An immense gratitude for America was in the hearts of these French civilians. Whatever causes of irritation and annoyance may have spoiled the fine flower of the enthusiasm with which France greeted the American armies when they first landed on her coast, and the admiration of the American people for France herself, it is certain, I think, that in those villages which were engirdled by the barbed wire of the hostile armies, and to which the American supplies came in days of dire distress, there will be a lasting reverence for the name of America, which was the fairy godmother of so many

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women and children. Over and over again these women told me of their gratitude. "Without the American Relief," they said, "we should have starved to death." Others said, "The only thing that saved us was the weekly distribution of the American supplies." "There has been no kindness in our fate," said one of them, "except the bounty of America."

It is true that into Mr. Hoover's warehouses there flowed great stores of food from England, Canada, France, and other countries, who gave generously, out of their own needs, for the sake of those who were in greater need, but the largest part of the work was America's, and hers was the honor of its organization.

In the face of that noble effort, revealing the enormous pity of the United States for suffering people, and a careless expenditure of that "almighty dollar" which now the American people poured into this abyss of European distress, it was impossible for France or England to accuse the United States of selfishness or of callousness because she still held back from any declaration of war against our enemies.

I honestly believe (though I shall not be

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believed in saying so) that the Americans who came over to Europe at this time, in the Red Cross or as volunteers, were more impatient of that delay of their country's purpose than public opinion in England. I met many American doctors, nurses, Red Cross volunteers, war correspondents, and business men, during that long time of waiting when President Wilson was writing his series of "Notes," and I could see how strained was their patience and how self-conscious and apologetic they were because their President used arguments instead of "direct action." One American friend of mine, with whom I often used to walk when streams of wounded Tommies were a bloody commentary on the everlasting theme of war, used to defend Wilson with a chivalrous devotion and wealth of argument. "Give him time," he used to say. "He is working slowly but surely to a definite conviction, and when he has made up his mind that there is no alternative not all the devils of hell will budge him from his course of action. You English must be patient with him and with all of us."

"But, my dear old man," I used to say, "we *are* patient. It is you who are impa-

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tient. There is no need of all that defensive argument. England realizes the difficulty of President Wilson and has a profound reverence for his ideals."

But my friend used to shake his head sadly.

"You are always guying us," he said. "Even at the mess-table your young officers fling about the words 'too proud to fight!' It makes it very hard for an American among you."

That was true. Our young officers, and some of our old ones, liked to "pull the leg" of any American who sat at table with them. They made jocular remarks about President Wilson as a complete letter-writer. That unfortunate remark, "too proud to fight," was too good to miss by young men with a careless sense of humor. It came in with devilish appropriateness on all sorts of occasions, as when a battery of ours fired off a consignment of American shells in which some failed to explode.

"They're too proud to fight, sir," said a subaltern, addressing the major, and there was a roar of laughter which hurt an American war correspondent in English uniform.

The English sense of humor remains of

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schoolboy character among any body of young men who delight in a little playful "ragging," and there is no doubt that some of us were not sufficiently aware how sensitive any American was at this time, and how a chance word spoken in jest would make his nerves jump.

But I am sure that the main body of English opinion was not impatient with America before she entered the war, but, on the contrary, understood the difficulty of obtaining a unanimous spirit over so vast a territory in order to have the whole nation behind the President. Indeed we exaggerated the differences of opinion in the United States and made a bogey of the alien population in the great "melting-pot." It seemed to many of us certain that if America declared war against Germany there would be civil riots and rebellions on a serious scale among German-Americans. That thought was always in our minds when we justified Wilson's philosophical reluctance to draw the sword; that and a very general belief among English "intellectuals" that it would be well to have one great nation and democracy outside the arena of conflict, free from the war madness that had taken possession of Eu-

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rope, to act as arbitrator if no decision could be obtained in the battlefields. It is safe to say now that in spite of newspaper optimism, engineered by the propaganda departments, there were many competent observers in the army as well as in the country who were led to the belief, after the first eighteen months of strife, that the war would end in a deadlock and that its continuance would only lead to further years of mutual extermination. For that reason they looked to the American people, under the leadership of President Wilson, as the only neutral power which could intervene to save the civilization of Europe, not by military acts, but by a call back to sanity and conciliation.

It was not until the downfall of Russia and the approaching menace of an immense concentration of German divisions on the western front that France and England began to look across the Atlantic with anxious eyes for military aid. Our immense losses and the complete elimination of Russia gave the Germans a chance of striking us mortal blows before their own man-power was exhausted. The vast accession of power that would come to us if the United States

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mobilized her manhood and threw them into the scale was realized and coveted by our military leaders, but even after America's declaration of war the imagination of the rank and file in England and France was not profoundly stirred by a new hope of support. Vaguely we heard of the tremendous whirlwind efforts "over there" to raise and equip armies, but there was hardly a man that I met who really believed in his soul that he would ever hear the tramp of American battalions up our old roads of war or see the Stars and Stripes fluttering over headquarters in France. Our men knew that at the quickest it would take a year to raise and train an American army, and in 1917 the thought of another year of war seemed fantastic, incredible, impossible. We believed—many of us—that before that year had passed the endurance of European armies and peoples would be at an end, and that in some way or other, by German defeat or general exhaustion, peace would come. To American people that may seem like weakness of soul. In a way it was weakness, but justified by the superhuman strain which our men had endured so long. Week after week, month after month, year after year,

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they had gone into the fields of massacre, and strong battalions had come out with frightful losses, to be made up again by new drafts and to be reduced again after another spell in the trenches or a few hours "over the top." It is true they destroyed an equal number of Germans, but Germany seemed to have an inexhaustible supply of "gun-fodder." Only extreme optimists, and generally those who were most ignorant, prophesied an absolute smash of the enemy's defensive power. By the end of 1917, when the British alone had lost 800,000 men in the fields of Flanders, the thought that another year still might pass before the end of the war seemed too horrible to entertain by men who were actually in the peril and misery of this conflict. Not even then did it seem likely that the Americans could be in before the finish. It was only when the startling meance of a new German offensive, in a last and mighty effort, threatened our weakened lines that England became impatient at last for American legions and sent out a call across the Atlantic, "Come quickly or you will come too late!"

America was ready. In a year she had raised the greatest army in the world by a natural energy which was terrific in its con-

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centration and enthusiasm. We knew that if she could get those men across the Atlantic, in spite of submarines, the Germans would be broken to bits, unless they could break us first by a series of rapid blows which would outpace the coming of the American troops. We did not believe that possible. Even when the enemy broke through the British lines in March of 1918, with one hundred and fourteen divisions to our forty-eight, we did not believe they would destroy our armies or force us to the coast. Facts showed that our belief was right, though it was a touch-and-go chance. We held our lines and England sent out her last reserves of youth—300,000 of them—to fill up our gaps. The Germans were stopped at a dead halt, exhausted after the immensity of their effort and by prodigious losses. Behind our lines, and behind the French front, there came now a tide of “new boys.” America was in France, and the doom of the German war machine was at hand.

It would be foolish of me to recapitulate the history of the American campaign. The people of the United States know what their men did in valor and in achievement, and Europe has not forgotten their heroism. Here I will rather describe as far as I may

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the impressions created in my own mind by the first sight of those American soldiers and by those I met on the battle-front.

The very first "bunch" of "Yanks" (as we called them) that I met in the field were non-combatants who suddenly found themselves in a tight corner. They belonged to some sections of engineers who were working on light railways in the neighborhood of two villages called Gouzeaucourt and Fins, in the Cambrai district. On the morning of November 30, 1917, I went up very early with the idea of going through Gouzeaucourt to the front line, three miles ahead, which we had just organized after Byng's surprise victory of November 20th, when we broke through the Hindenburg lines with squadrons of tanks, and rounded up thousands of prisoners and many guns. As I went through Fins toward Gouzeaucourt I was aware of some kind of trouble. The men of some labor battalions were tramping back in a strange, disorganized way, and a number of field batteries were falling back.

"What's up?" I asked, and a young officer answered me.

"The Germans have made a surprise attack and broken through."

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"Where are they?" I asked again, startled by this news.

He pointed up the road.

"Just there. . . . Inside Gouzeaucourt."

The situation was extremely unpleasant. The enemy had brought up some field-guns and was scattering his fire. It was in a field close by that I met the American engineers.

"I guess this is not in the contract," said one of them, grinning. "All the same, if I find any Britisher to lend me a rifle I'll get a knock at those fellers who spoiled my breakfast."

One man stooped for a petrol tin and put it on his head as a shell came howling over us.

"I guess this makes me look more like you other guys," he said, with a glance at our steel helmets.

One tall, loose-limbed, swarthy fellow, who looked like a Mexican, but came from Texas, as he told me, was spoiling for a fight, and with many strange oaths declared his intention of going into Gouzeaucourt with the first batch of English who would go that way with him. They were the Grenadier Guards who came up to the counter-attack, munching apples, as I remember, when they marched toward the enemy. Some of the

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American engineers joined them and with borrowed rifles helped to clear out the enemy's machine-gun nests and recapture the ruins of the village. I met some of them the following day again, and they told me it was a "darned good scrap." They were "darned" good men, hard, tough, humorous, and full of individual character.

The general type of young Americans was not, however, like these hard-grained men of middle age who had led an adventurous life before they came to see what war was like in Europe. We watched them curiously as the first battalions came streaming along the old roads of France and Picardy, and we were conscious that they were different from all the men and all the races behind our battle-front. Physically they were splendid—those boys of the Twenty-seventh and Seventy-seventh Divisions whom we saw first of all. They were taller than any of our regiments, apart from the Guards, and they had a fine, easy swing of body as they came marching along. They were better dressed than our Tommies, whose rough khaki was rather shapeless. There was a dandy cut about this American uniform and the cloth was of good quality, so that, arriving fresh,

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they looked wonderfully spruce and neat compared with our weatherworn, battle-battered lads who had been fighting through some hard and dreadful days. But those accidental differences did not matter. What was more interesting was the physiognomy and character of these young men who, by a strange chapter of history, had come across the wide Atlantic to prove the mettle of their race and the power of their nation in this world struggle. It came to me, and to many other Englishmen, as a revelation that there was an American type, distinctive, clearly marked off from our own, utterly different from the Canadians, Australians, and New-Zealanders, as strongly racial as the French or Italians. In whatever uniform those men had been marching one would have known them as Americans. Looking down a marching column, we saw that it was something in the set of the eyes, in the character of the cheek-bones, and in the facial expression that made them distinctive. They had a look of independence and self-reliance, and it was as visible as the sun that these were men with a sort of national pride and personal pride, conscious that behind them was a civilization and a power which

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would give them victory though they in the vanguard might die. Those words express feebly and foolishly the first impression that came to us when the "Yanks" came marching up the roads of war, but that in a broad way was the truth of what we thought. I remember one officer of ours summed up these ideas as he stood on the edge of the road, watching one of those battalions passing with their transport.

"What we are seeing," he said, "is the greatest thing that has happened in history since the Norman Conquest. It is the arrival of America in Europe. Those boys are coming to fulfill the destiny of a people which for three hundred years has been preparing, building, growing, for the time when it will dominate the world. Those young soldiers will make many mistakes. They will be mown down in their first attacks. They will throw away their lives recklessly, because of their freshness and ignorance. But behind them are endless waves of other men of their own breed and type. Germany will be destroyed because her man-power is already exhausted, and she cannot resist the weight which America will now throw against her. But by this victory, which will leave

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all the old Allies weakened and spent and licking their wounds, America will be the greatest power in the world, and will hold the destiny of mankind in her grasp. Those boys slogging through the dust are like the Roman legionaries. With them marches the fate of the world, of which they are masters."

"A good thing or a bad?" I asked my friend.

He made a circle in the dust with his trench stick, and stared into the center of it.

"Who can tell?" he said, presently. "Was it good or bad that the Romans conquered Europe, or that afterward they fell before the barbarians? Was it good or bad that William and his Normans conquered England? . . . There is no good or bad in history; there is only change, building-up, and disintegrating, new cycles of energy, decay, and rebirth. After this war, which those lads will help to win, the power will pass to the west, and Europe will fall into the second class."

Those were high views. Thinking less in prophecy, getting into touch with the actual men, I was struck by the exceptionally high level of individual intelligence among the

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rank and file, and by the general gravity among them. The American private soldier seemed to me less repressed by discipline than our men. He had more original points of view, expressed himself with more independence of thought, and had a greater sense of his own personal value and dignity. He was immensely ignorant of European life and conditions, and our Tommies were superior to him in that respect. Nor had he their easy way of comradeship with French and Flemish peasants, their whimsical philosophy of life which enabled them to make a joke in the foulest places and conditions. They were harder, less sympathetic; in a way, I think, less imaginative and spiritual than English or French. They had no tolerance with foreign habits or people. After their first look round they had very little use for France or the French. The language difficulty balked them at the outset and they did not trouble much to cope with it, though I remember some of the boys sitting under the walls of French villages with small children who read out words in conversation-books and taught them to pronounce. They had a fierce theoretical hatred of the Germans, who, they believed, were bad men, in

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the real old-fashioned style of devil incarnate, so that it was up to every American soldier to kill Germans in large numbers. It was noticeable that after the armistice, when the American troops were billeted among German civilians, that hatred wore off very quickly, as it did with the English Tommies, human nature being stronger than war passion. Before they had been in the fighting-line a week these "new boys" had no illusions left about the romance or the adventure of modern war. They hated shell-fire as all soldiers hate it, they loathed the filth of the trenches, and—they were very homesick.

I remember one private soldier who had fought in the American-Spanish war and in the Philippines—an old "tough."

"Three weeks of this war," he said, "is equal to three years of all others."

But he and "the pups," as he called his younger comrades, were going to see it through, and they were animated by the same ideals with which the French and British had gone into the war.

"This is a fight for civilization," said one man, and another said, "There'll be no liberty in the world if the Germans win."

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It is natural that many of the boys were full of "buck" before they saw the real thing, and were rather scornful of the British and French troops, who had been such a long time "doing nothing," as they said.

"You've been kidding yourselves that you know how to fight," said one of them to an English Tommy. "We've come to show you!"

That was boys' talk, like our "ragging," and was not meant seriously. On the contrary, the companies of the Twenty-seventh Division who went into action with the Australians at Hamel near Amiens—the first time that American troops were in action in France—were filled with admiration for the stolid way in which those veterans played cards in their dugouts before going over the top at dawn. The American boys were tense and strained, knowing that in a few hours they would be facing death. But when the time came they went away like greyhounds, and were reckless of fire.

"They'll go far when they've learned a bit," said the Australians.

They had to learn the usual lessons in the same old way, by mistakes, by tragedy, by lack of care. They overcrowded their for-

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ward trenches so that they suffered more heavily than they should have done under enemy shell-fire. They advanced in the open against machine-gun nests and were mown down. They went ahead too fast without "mopping up" the ground behind them, and on the day they helped to break the Hindenburg line they did not clear out the German dugouts, and the Germans came out with their machine-guns and started fighting in the rear, so that when the Australians came up in support they had to capture the ground again, and lost many men before they could get in touch with the Americans ahead. For some time the American transport system broke down, so that the fighting troops did not always obtain their supplies on the field of battle, and there were other errors, inevitable in an army starting a great campaign with inexperienced staff officers. What never failed was the gallantry of the troops, which reached heights of desperate valor in the forest of the Argonne.

The officers were tremendously in earnest. What struck us most was their gravity. Our officers took their responsibility lightly, laughed and joked more readily, and had a

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boyish, whimsical sense of humor. It seemed to us, perhaps quite wrongly, that the American officers were not, on the whole, of a merry disposition. They were frank and hearty, but as they walked about their billeting area behind the lines some of them looked rather solemn and grim, and our young men were nervous of them. I think that was simply a matter of facial expression *plus* a pair of spectacles, for on closer acquaintance one found, invariably, that an American officer was a human soul, utterly devoid of swank, simple, straight, and delightfully courteous. Their modesty was at times almost painful. They were over-anxious to avoid hurting the feelings of French or British by any appearance of self-conceit. "We don't know a darned thing about this war," said many of them, so that the phrase became familiar to us. "We have come here to learn."

Well, they learned pretty quickly and there were some things they did not need teaching—courage, endurance, pride of manhood, pride of race. They were not going to let down the Stars and Stripes, though all hell was against them. They won a new glory for the Star-spangled Banner, and it

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was the weight they threw in and the valor that went with it which, with the French and British armies attacking all together, under the directing genius of Foch, helped to break the German war machine and to achieve decisive and supreme victory.

It would have been better, I think, for America and for all of us, especially for France, if quickly after victory the American troops had gone back again. That was impossible because of holding the Rhine and enforcing the terms of peace. But during the long time that great bodies of American troops remained in France after the day of armistice, there was occasion for the bigness of ideals and achievements to be whittled down by the little nagging annoyances of a rather purposeless existence. Boredom, immense and long enduring, took possession of the American army in France. The boys wanted to go home, now that the job was done. They wanted the victory march down Fifth Avenue, not the lounging life in little French villages, nor even the hectic gayeties of leave in Paris. Old French châteaux used as temporary headquarters suffered from successive waves of occupation by officers who proceeded to modernize their

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surroundings by plugging old panels for electric light and fixing up telephone-wires through painted ceilings, to the horror of the concierges and the scandal of the neighborhood. In the restaurants and hotels and cinema halls the Americans trooped in, took possession of all the tables, shouted at the waiters who did not seem to know their jobs, and expressed strong views in loud voices (understood by French civilians who had learned English in the war) about the miserable quality of French food and the darned arrogance of French officers. It was all natural and inevitable—but unfortunate. The French were too quick to forget after armistice that they owed a good deal to American troops for the complete defeat of Germany. The Americans were not quite careful in remembering the susceptibilities of a sensitive people. So there were disillusion and irritation on both sides, in a broad and general way, allowing for many individual friendships between French and Americans, many charming memories which will remain on both sides of the Atlantic when the war is old in history.

Americans who overcame the language difficulty by learning enough to exchange

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views with the French inhabitants—and there were many—were able to overlook the minor, petty things which divided the two races, and were charmed with the intelligence, spirit, and humor of the French bourgeoisie and educated classes. They got the best out of France, and were enchanted with French cathedrals, mediæval towns, picture-galleries, and life. Paris caught hold of them, as it takes hold of all men and women who know something of its history and learn to know and love its people. Thousands of American officers came to know Paris intimately, from Montmartre to Montparnasse, became familiar and welcome friends in little restaurants tucked away in the side-streets, where they exchanged badinage with the proprietor and the waitresses, and felt the spirit of Paris creep into their bones and souls. Along the Grands Boulevards these young men from America watched the pageant of life pass by as they sat outside the cafés, studying the little high-heeled ladies who passed by with a side-glance at these young men, marveling at the strange medley of uniforms, as French, English, Australian, New Zealand, Canadian, Italian, Portuguese, and African soldiers went by, realizing

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the meaning of "Europe" with all its races and rivalries and national traditions, and getting to know the inside of European politics by conversations with men who spoke with expert knowledge about this conglomeration of peoples. Those young men who are now back in the United States have already made a difference to their country's intellectual outlook. They have taught America to look out upon the world with wider vision and to abandon the old isolation of American thought which was apt to ignore the rest of the human family and remain self-contained and aloof from a world policy.

During the months that followed the armistice many Americans of high intellectual standing came to Europe, attracted by the great drama and business of the Peace Conference, and to prepare the way for the reconstruction of civilization after the years of conflict. They were statesmen, bankers, lawyers, writers, and financiers. I met some of them in Paris, Rome, Vienna, London, and other cities of Europe. They were the onlookers and the critics of the new conflict that had followed the old, the conflict of ideas, policy, and passion

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which raged outside the quiet chamber at Versailles, where President Wilson, Lloyd George, Clemenceau, and a few less important mortals were redrawing the frontiers of Europe, Asia, and other parts of the globe. From the first, many of these men were frank in private conversation about the hostility that was growing up in the United States against President Wilson, and the distrust of the American people in a league of nations which might involve the United States in European entanglements alien to her interests and without the consent of her people. At the same time, and at that time when there still seemed to be a chance of arriving at a new compact between nations which would eliminate the necessity of world-wide war, and of washing out the blood-stains of strife by new springs of human tolerance and international common sense, these American visitors did not throw down the general scheme for a league of nations, and looked to the Peace Conference to put forward a treaty which might at least embody the general aspirations of stricken peoples. Gradually these onlookers sickened with disgust. They sickened at the interminable delays in the work of the Conference, and the imperi-

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alistic ambitions of the Allied powers, and the greedy rivalries of the little nations, at all the falsity of lip-service to high principles while hatred, vengeance, injustice, and sordid interests were in the spirit of that document which might have been the new Charter of Rights for the peoples of the world. They saw that Clemenceau's vision of peace was limited to the immediate degradation and ruin of the Central Powers, and that he did not care for safeguarding the future or for giving liberty and justice and a chance of economic life to democracies liberated from military serfdom. They saw that Lloyd George was shifting his ground continually as pressure was brought to bear on him now from one side of the Cabinet and now from the other, so that his policy was a strange compound of extreme imperialism and democratic idealism, with the imperialist ambition winning most of the time. They saw that Wilson was being hoodwinked by the subtlety of diplomatists who played on his vanity, and paid homage to his ideals, and made a prologue of his principles to a drama of injustice. Our American visitors were perplexed and distressed. They had desired to be heart and soul with the Allies in the

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settlement of peace. They still cherished the ideals which had uplifted them in the early days of the war. They were resolved that the United States should not play a selfish part in the settlement or profit by the distress of nations who had been hard hit. But gradually they became disillusioned with the statecraft of Europe, and disappointed with the low level of intelligence and morality reflected in the newspaper press of Europe, which still wrote in the old strain of "propaganda" when insincerity and manufactured falsehood took the place of truth. They hardened visibly, I think, against the view that the United States should be pledged by Wilson to the political and economic schemes of the big powers in Europe, which, far from healing the wounds of the world, kept them raw and bleeding, while arranging, not deliberately, but very certainly, for future strife into which America would be dragged against her will. England and France failed to see the American point of view, which seems to me reasonable and sound.

The generous way in which the United States came to the rescue of starving peoples in the early days of the war was not deserted

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by her when the armistice and the peace that followed revealed the frightful distress in Poland, Hungary, and Austria. While the doom of these people was being pronounced by statesmen not naturally cruel, but nevertheless sentencing great populations to starvation, and while the blockade was still in force, American representatives of a higher law than that of vengeance went into these ruined countries and organized relief on a great scale for suffering childhood and despairing womanhood. I saw the work of the American Relief Committee in Vienna and remember it as one of the noblest achievements I have seen. All ancient enmity, all demands for punishment or reparation, went down before the agony of Austria. Vienna, a city of two and a half million souls, once the capital of a great empire, for centuries a rendezvous of gayety and genius, the greatest school of medicine in the world, the birthplace and home of many great musicians, and the dwelling-place of a happy, careless, and luxurious people, was now delivered over to beggary and lingering death. With all its provinces amputated so that it was cut off from its old natural resources of food and raw material, it had no means of

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livelihood and no hope. Austrian paper money had fallen away to mere trash. The krone tumbled down to the value of a cent, and it needed many kronen to buy any article of life—2,000 for a suit of clothes, 800 for a pair of boots, 25 for the smallest piece of meat in any restaurant. Middle-class people lived almost exclusively on cabbage soup, with now and then potatoes. A young doctor I met had a salary of 60 kronen a week. When I asked him how he lived he said: "I don't. This is not life." The situation goes into a nutshell when I say—as an actual fact—that the combined salaries of the Austrian Cabinet amounted, according to the rate of exchange, to the wages of three old women who look after the lavatories in Lucerne. Many people, once rich, lived on bundles of paper money which they flung away as leaves are scattered from autumn trees. They were the lucky ones, though ruin stared them in the eyes. By smuggling, which became an open and acknowledged system, they could afford to pay the ever-mounting prices of the peasants for at least enough food to keep themselves alive. But the working-classes, who did not work because factories were closed for lack of coal

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and raw material, just starved, keeping the flame of life afflicker by a thin and miserable diet, until the weakest died. Eighty-three per cent. of the children had rickets in an advanced stage. Children of three and four had never sat up or walked. Thousands of children were just living skeletons, with gaunt cheek-bones and bloodless lips. They padded after one in the street, like little old monkeys, holding out their claws for alms.

The American Relief Committee got to work in the early months of 1919. They brought truck-loads of food to Vienna, established distributing centers and feeding centers in old Viennese palaces, and when I was there in the early autumn they were giving 200,000 children a meal a day. I went round these places with a young American naval officer—Lieutenant Stockton—one of the leading organizers of relief, and I remember him as one of the best types of manhood I have ever met up and down the roads of life. His soul was in his job, but there was nothing sloppy about his sentiment or his system. He was a master of organization and details and had established the machinery of relief, with Austrian ladies doing the drudgery with splendid devotion

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(as he told me, and as I saw), so that it was in perfect working order. As a picture of childhood receiving rescue from the agony of hunger, I remember nothing so moving nor so tragic as one of those scenes when I saw a thousand children sitting down to the meal that came from America. Here before them in that bowl of soup was life and warmth. In their eyes there was the light of ecstasy, the spiritual gratitude of children for the joy that had come after pain. For a little while they had been reprieved from the hunger-death.

American agents of the Y. M. C. A., nurses, members of American missions and philanthropic societies, penetrated Europe in far and strange places. I met a crowd of them on the "Entente train" from Vienna to Paris, and in various Italian towns. They were all people with shrewd, observant eyes, a quiet sense of humor, and a repugnance to be "fudged off" from actual facts by any humbug of theorists. They studied the economic conditions of the countries through which they traveled, studied poverty by personal visits to slum areas and working-class homes, and did not put on colored spectacles to stare at the life in which they found

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themselves. The American girls were as frank and courageous as the men in their facing of naked truth, and they had no false prudery or sentimental shrinking from the spectacle of pain and misery. Their greatest drawback was an ignorance of foreign languages, which prevented many of them from getting more than superficial views of national psychology, and I think many of them suffered from the defect of admirable qualities by a humorous contempt of foreign habits and ideas. That did not make them popular with people whom they were not directly helping. Their hearty laughter, their bunching together in groups in which conversation was apt to become noisy, and their cheerful disregard of conventionality in places where Europeans were on their "best behavior" had an irritating effect at times upon foreign observers, who said: "Those Americans have not learned good manners. They are the new barbarians in Europe." English people, traveling as tourists before the war, were accused of the same lack of respect and courtesy, and were unpopular for the same reason.

Toward the end of 1919 and in the beginning of 1920 I came into touch with a number

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of Americans who came to Europe on business enterprises or to visit the battle-fields. In private conversation they did not disguise their sense of distress that there were strained relations between the public opinion of England and America. Several of them asked me if it were true that England was as hostile to America as the newspapers tried to make out. By way of answer I asked them whether America were as hostile to us as the newspapers asked us to believe. They admitted at once that this was a just and illuminating reply, because the intelligent section of American society—people of decent education and good will—was far from being hostile to England, but on the contrary believed firmly that the safety and happiness of the world depended a good deal upon Anglo-American friendship. It was true that the average citizen of the United States, even if he were uninfluenced by Irish-American propaganda, believed that England was treating Ireland stupidly and unjustly—to which I answered that the majority of English people agreed with that view, though realizing the difficulty of satisfying Ireland by any measure short of absolute independence and separation. It was also true,

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they told me, that there was a general suspicion in the United States that England had made a big grab in the peace terms for imperial aggrandizement, masked under the high-sounding name of "mandate" for the protection of African and Oriental states. My reply to that, not as a political argument, but as simple sincerity, was the necessity of some control of such states, if the power of the Turk were to be abolished from his old strongholds, and a claim for the British tradition as an administrator of native races; but I added another statement which my American friends found it hard to believe, though it is the absolute truth, as nine Englishmen out of ten will affirm. So far from desiring an extension of our empire, the vast and overwhelming majority of British people, not only in England, but in our dominions beyond the seas, are aghast at the new responsibilities which we have undertaken, and would relinquish many of them, especially in Asia, with a sense of profound relief. We have been saddled with new and perilous burdens by the ambition of certain statesmen who have earned the bitter animosity of the great body of the British people entirely out of sympathy with their imperialistic ideals.

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I have not encountered a single American in Europe who has not expressed, with what I believe is absolute sincerity, a friendly and affectionate regard for England, whose people and whose ways of life they like, and whose language, literature, and ideals belong to our united civilization. They have not found in England any of that hostility which they were told to expect, apart from a few blackguardly articles in low-class journals. On the contrary, they have found a friendly folk, grateful for their help in the war, full of admiration for American methods, and welcoming them to our little old island.

They have gone back to the United States with the conviction, which I share, with all my soul, that commercial rivalry, political differences, and minor irritations, inevitable between two progressive peoples of strong character, must never be allowed to divide our two nations, who fundamentally belong to the same type of civilization and to the same code of principles. Most of the so-called hostility between us is the mere froth of foul-mouthed men on both sides, and the rest of it is due to the ignorance of the masses. We must get to know each other, as the Americans in Europe have learned to know

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us and to like us, and as all of us who have crossed the Atlantic the other way about have learned to know and like the American people. For the sake of the future of the world and all the hopes of humanity we must get to the heart of each other and establish a lasting and unbreakable friendship. It is only folly that will prevent us.

THE END

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